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FOCUS ON NEW YORK

Who Knows New York?—Notes on a Mixed-up City • The Mayor's Dilemmas • A New Look at the Melting Pot • The Poor, Near-Poor, and Non-Poor • A Permanent Welfare Crisis? • Immobilisme in Housing • The Community Revolution • New York's Economic Condition •

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THE MAYOR'S DILEMMAS: I

Power and powerlessness in a regional city

ROGER STARR

A CONFUSION in nomenclature makes New York City difficult to write about. Is New York City Manhattan Island? It is, but it also isn't. In 1964, when the City of New York celebrated its three hundredth anniversary, the City of New York was also only sixty-six years old. A plaque in City Hall lists 103 mayors; yet it is equally accurate, and probably much more pertinent, to point out that New York City has had only thirteen mayors since 1898, when it was consolidated. In 1898, those who lived in New York City expected that the city they knew would always control the political entity then being established; this lingering expectation confuses most accounts of the present city, and has tended even to confuse its voters and its mayors.

The New York City of 1898 included the old city of New York—a long-established municipality occupying Manhattan Island—and a small section of the continental mainland broken off from Westchester County called The Bronx. The Consolidation added the satellite city of Brooklyn (which itself had previously swallowed the suburban sections of Kings County), Queens County (a typically suburban area) and all of Staten Island, vast but vacant. Each of the three previously independent counties—Kings, Queens, and Richmond (Staten Island)—became boroughs of the City of New York. The old city of New York became the borough of Manhattan, and the Bronx consolidated all the bits of mainland. Each borough

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elected its own president who exercised certain executive powers, notably over local roads and streets and over the scheduling and location of city-owned improvements. The charter provided that the executive powers of city government were entrusted to the mayor who was directly elected by all of the people. Two other officials were to be elected on a city-wide basis: the president of the Board of Aldermen, which was to be the city's legislative body, capable of passing whatever laws the state government would permit the city to enact; and the comptroller, an independently elected fiscal officer.

In effect, the 1898 Consolidation established New York City as a regional government, amalgamating two core cities—old New York and Brooklyn—with their surrounding suburbs, outlying small villages, and rural land. Earnest citizens in America—even in New York—have held up the ideal of a regional government as a misty, glamorous objective; a Valhalla of good government. Many of these gentlemen have forgotten that New York City has, for seventy years now, offered a practical demonstration of the possibilities and difficulties of a regional government that exerts exclusive general power over what were once independent municipal, village, and county authorities. Instead of speculating as to how regional government *might* work, one can see how New York *does* work—or *doesn't*.

New York City, then, provides a locus for examining the widely expressed current theory that the present problem of the central city—the plight of the Negro poor—can be solved only on a stage broader than the city; that, in the words of some, the suburbs must come to the help of the central city. What these words mean is not exactly clear. Perhaps they mean that black people in the central city will be encouraged to move out into the suburban acreage, reducing overcrowding and mitigating race and income segregation. Perhaps they mean that the excess income of the suburban middle class will be used to relieve urban poverty, or that the suburban schools will be opened to central city children. If any of these is possible anywhere, it should be possible in that regional city in which suburbs and central city are already combined, in which one political administration holds sway over all, in which centralization has been, until recently, the tendency of reform, and in which, most people believe, the central city political machine still enjoys considerable power to work its will. That city is New York.

The problems of the city's mayor provide a convenient point of focus for such an examination. The job of mayor has frequently been described as the most difficult in the nation, second only to the presidency. Few who refer to this definition make specific the grounds of the difficulty, but one might surmise that the reason lies in the mayor's need, like Plato's charioteer, to control at once two horses—the central city and the outer boroughs—so differently gaited, with only a single hand. How does he manage it? *Can* he manage it?

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Bridges and politics

Salt water keeps the boroughs of the present City of New York apart geographically. But it was salt water that tied them together politically. The East River, a 2,000-foot wide tidal estuary, separates Manhattan Island from Long Island, as it once separated old New York City from the City of Brooklyn. For a few minutes every six hours, the currents in the East River stop, but at all other times the tide flows back and forth as fast as six miles an hour, trying—as harbor pilots say—to push all of the Atlantic Ocean into Long Island Sound, and then to suck it back again. Until 1884, ferries alone connected Brooklyn to New York, and beyond it to the continental mainland. The currents swept the ferries upstream or down, doubling and tripling the miles of their shortest course, and multiplying the time of passage. In winter, ice floes made docking a nightmare. The currents also ruled out a drawbridge because no vessels could wait patiently in these swift waters while the bridge tender stopped traffic to open his span.

Although everyone knew that a bridge would have to be built between New York and Brooklyn, not until 1867 did a reputable engineer step forward with a plan for a high-level bridge that made sense. The engineer, John Roebling, proposed a suspension bridge hung from two high masonry towers, themselves resting on supporting strata of compacted material fifty feet below the riverbed. Each of these elements was new; to accomplish them all in this spot required daring and skill. (The Brooklyn Bridge center span alone would be half again as long as the longest suspension bridge that had ever been built anywhere.) The story of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge set to music, would make a splendidly implausible opera. But in the end it got built. In 1884, President Chester A. Arthur formally opened the bridge. Within a few years, it was jammed with traffic.

It was clear that more bridges had to be built. How were they to be financed? Most of the economic advantages would accrue to the outlying areas; but they didn't have the money for so expensive an enterprise. If the East River had been a gentle, lovers' stream like the Seine, additional bridges would have posed no great political and fiscal problems. Some wealthy benefactor might even have given the cities a bridge, as Nicholas II of Russia endowed Paris with one in his father's memory. But neither Brooklyn nor New York City inspired the infinitely greater love necessary to span the East River a second time, not even in the tender breast of Grover Cleveland or that of William McKinley. In the 1890's, the powers of the national government stopped short of highway construction or finance. Only New York City, as it was then, could pay the cost. And the only

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way New York City could earn an adequate return on its investment would be by consolidating these outlying towns into the city itself.

From the point of view of the individual taxpayer of New York City, consolidation was attractive. Consolidation would mean a broader tax base, even if it meant that the inner-city New Yorker might pay higher taxes for a while, owing to equalization of his tax rates with the higher rates paid in the residential and farming lands to be annexed. From the point of view of the New York City politician, there was little to fear from consolidation. In the 1890's, New York City had more people than all the other boroughs combined. Similarly, most taxpayers in the small towns across the river saw the consolidation question very simply: without consolidation, no bridges; without bridges, no transportation to the city; without transportation, no land boom.

Transit as a political utility

It can fairly be said that, over the years, transportation has been the vital issue on which the borough political parties have aligned their power. Transportation had, more than any other political issue, a crucial effect on the development of each borough, its future population trends, and its land values. Ultimately, of course, transportation required a far greater municipal investment than the cost merely of the river crossings. To open the new boroughs for development a road network and trolley lines would be needed, much of this paid for by the inner-city taxpayer.

Even more important than roads to the outer boroughs where transportation became a political issue long before the automobile—was the spread of rapid transit, and the five cent fare. The first subway was opened in 1904; by 1929, the subway system interlaced four of the five boroughs. In the boroughs other than Manhattan, the location of the subway system—and most particularly, the location of the subway *stops*—determined the pattern of land development, including of course the value of the land itself. The issues of subway planning, fares, and finance were central to New York City politics until the final emergence of the wholly publicly-owned system under Mayor La Guardia. (When the lines were completed, however, only the fares mattered. Mayor Wagner's decision to sell off the publicly-owned electric generating stations that powered the system, and to buy the subway's power from Consolidated Edison, raised scarcely a whispered protest.)

Transit provided the essential ingredient of effective politics: a worthwhile stake, important enough to justify sacrifices and accommodations. The stake in the development of adequate transit in the outer boroughs is quite clear. From 1904 to 1929—in short, from the opening of the first subway to the development of the system sub-

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stantially as it exists today—the assessed values of land in Manhattan rose by 100 per cent. Over the same period, the assessed values of land in Queens rose ten times as much—1,000 per cent.

But the development of the entire transit system is incremental: it is added to, bit by bit. The major jumps consist of the construction of the water crossings: these, after all, produced the consolidation of the city in 1898. They are still capable of producing compromise today, when they become political issues. One of the troubles with New York City politics is that water crossings are now only rarely its subject matter. [1]

As the years have passed, the federal government has learned—all too well, perhaps—how to provide highway funds. There are even mild suggestions that it will pay for some rapid transit rail operations. If it is true that the weight of financing city transport has been permanently lifted from the shoulders of local government officials, what will take its place to advance today the consolidation of a general purpose government like New York's? Ironically, independent towns and cities that share a waterside location (such as San Francisco Bay) might join hands to solve special problems that affect them all. But a network of federally financed "special purpose" districts, concerned with problems of pollution, waste disposal, transport, and water supply within a city, can offer no gifts by which the central city can induce its limited partners to accept a share of the general burden represented by its overcrowded, urban poor.

Historic differences within the city

The reformers, those perennial optimists, have always stressed the ideological superiority of a single government as the reason for con-

[1] Perhaps the last demonstration of the usefulness of water crossing in provoking political accommodation was provided only two years ago. The borough president of Queens demanded the expansion of subways into the northern part of his borough. This in turn required the construction of a new tunnel under the East River. Naturally the approval of the Board of Estimate was necessary in order to put the tunnel under construction; this was impossible without the mayor's support. Mayor Lindsay, at the same time, wanted to develop scattered low-rent public housing developments in Queens which, as we shall have many opportunities to observe, was a grossly unpopular proposal in Queens. The borough president's need for a subway tunnel and the mayor's demand for public housing in Queens seem to have interacted to produce the tunnel contract and the borough president's support, however reluctant, for at least some of the projects endorsed by the mayor.

It might be noted that the new Queens tunnel was approved—like the vehicular bridges long ago—before anyone had settled the route that the tracks would follow on either side of the river. By 1969, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, a state agency, had taken command of rapid transit in New York City. This was intended to remove transit from politics; if such a device had existed in the 1890's, New York City might never have been consolidated.

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solidation, while ignoring the practical exigencies of funding bridges and tunnels. There have been many ideological arguments in favor of municipal unity. In New York they were expressed most urgently before consolidation by Andrew H. Green, a former city comptroller and park commissioner, and the spiritual "grandfather" of Consolidation. Green wrote:

> Great as our interests in this result (consolidation), they are trivial in comparison with those which our example will effect throughout the country, world, and history . . . we owe it to ourselves, to all our countrymen, and even to mankind to eliminate . . . all necessary factors of disturbance (and) incompetencies which factitious conditions of multiplicity of governments in the same sphere have heretofore made it subject of reproach.

These lofty sentiments have been echoed frequently—though with somewhat muted rhetorical flourishes—by the city's reformers over the years. They have consistently fought against borough governments, criticized borough politicians, chipped away at local administrative power, and regarded central-city government as uniquely qualified to run things. Only in the last few years has decentralization come back into vogue with the students of government; but the practical central-city politician knows he needs outer borough votes to stay in office.

The differences within the city as a whole—especially between its central borough, Manhattan, and the other boroughs—remain substantial. These are not the differences between probity and dishonor, but the differences between social classes, economic aspirations, and major political motivations. Each borough has developed in its own way, and its pattern of development has emphasized the differences of the several sections within each borough. These sectional differences, in turn, reflect the degree of development which preceded the availability of rapid transit.

Brooklyn, for example, includes not only the old satellite city but the rural sections of Kings County as well. The older city of Brooklyn had been built up long before the Brooklyn Bridge was built. As the years have passed, downtown Brooklyn, therefore, has developed some of the characteristic quality of older Manhattan, the brutal juxtaposition of rich and poor.

Brooklyn's old one-family home district, Bedford-Stuyvesant was developed before the subway lines reached it, at a time when the value of land could not justify upper-middle-class detached homes. The row house form in the central city has been peculiarly susceptible to deterioration; much of Bedford-Stuyvesant consists of a low-income population of roomers and tenants in once-attractive and potentially reclaimable one-family homes.

Much further from Manhattan than Bedford-Stuyvesant, the Flat-

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bush section was developed with detached homes before the subway lines were built. When the lines arrived, land values rose, and substantial apartment houses, which are still in excellent condition, replaced many of the free-standing homes.

This contrast in development patterns may explain the old demand made by the outer boroughs on the city mayor: Provide us with cheap and efficient transportation! Provide it now!

Once he has transport, the resident of the outer borough, who typically moved into the apartment houses of Flatbush and Forest Hills, or the one- and two-family homes further out—believes that the city should bestow on him all the services he gave up in the inner city. To the central-city reformer this demand looks selfish and parochial, a view which the outer borough resident cannot share. If one tells him that his standard of living should be shaved down to provide affluence for the urban poor, his response is incredulity. He feels himself struggling as hard to maintain his standard of living as the poor inner-city man struggles to maintain his. Unfortunately, the services now demanded by the outer borough resident—a new school for his neighborhood, better hospital services for his community—are too limited geographically to comprise an effective borough-wide bargaining stake for mayoral politics.

Coping with newcomers

The central city is different. The department stores and the office managers of the largest enterprises in town talk of good cheap transportation, but the resident voter in the central city has another concern. Personal safety prods him to vote. Having chosen convenience over physical separation from the city's dangers, the central-city man demands civil peace above all else. Of course, each central-city man always believes that *he,* in his time, must survive the period of greatest danger in the city's history. The poor newcomers pose the greatest threat to peace. The newcomers of a previous period—newcomers who might have frightened his father (unless his father was himself a newcomer)—look very tame to him.

Since the year of New York's consolidation, few spans of years have passed without poor newcomers. Some have always committed offenses against existing law and order and turned up disproportionately to their numbers in the police stations and the jails. They always frightened the good people who had arrived before them. And the main role of the political party that ran the central city was to buy peace for the present constituents by "Americanizing" the low-income arrivals. Americanization was traditionally carried forward by employing them, by teaching them the facts of American life, by performing services for them that were sometimes extra-legal, sometimes merely friendly.

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Richard Croker, the dour leader of Tammany Hall in the 1880's and 1890's, when the new immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe was at its flood, described the process in these words:

> Think of the hundreds of thousands of foreigners dumped into our city. They are too old to go to school. . . . They are alone, ignorant strangers, a prey to all manner of anarchial and wild notions. Except to their employers, they have no value until they get a vote. . . . And Tammany looks after them for the sake of their vote, grafts them upon the Republic, makes citizens of them in short. . . . If we go down to the gutter it is because there are men in the gutter, and you have to go down where they are if you are to do anything with them.

Mr. Croker knew what had to be done to "Americanize" the newcomer. His successors had a tougher time. Civil Service interfered with the employment process. ("Civil Service," said George Washington Plunkett, the philosopher of Tammany Hall, "is a monster with its heel pressed against the throat of honest workingmen," a cry which some spokesmen for current new arrivals have been echoing.) The central-city politician devoted himself to seeing that his blocs of new voters were treated properly under civil service; this meant, in a word, that each of New York's major departments became the preserve of a particular group, the police and firemen—oldest of the departments—were in the hands of the first arrivals: the Irish and their children. The sanitation department came into the hands of the Italians. Jews followed disappearing Protestant maiden ladies into the ranks of the school teachers. As each group progressed, it tended, with some exceptions, to move out of the old central city and into the outer boroughs. For the Negroes who followed behind, and some of whom in their turn now pose their threat to civil peace, fewer and smaller gifts are now in the hands of the central-city politicians. Hospital and health services and the transit system have provided some jobs, but not enough; other jobs are still in the hands of previous arrivals. Breaking open these "occupied turfs" is complicated and painful. That is why the construction of publicly owned and publicly assisted housing in the outer boroughs becomes an issue of at least symbolic importance for the inner city political leader. His good faith toward the inner-city poor is demonstrated whenever he demands that low-income housing be placed in the middle class precincts of outer Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. The possibility of such an occurrence merely stiffens the backs of the residents of these boroughs to resist such changes. In part as a response to the threat that the inner-city government may move strange bodies into the outer boroughs and in part because the status of the residents in these outer boroughs is, in their own view, extremely precarious, the pressing political objective of the outer boroughs is no longer transportation. It is resistance to change.

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Because the inner-city political leadership wants change in order to have civil peace, whereas the outer-city political leadership wants peace in order to resist change, the possibility of harmonious progression toward a common objective is slim indeed without the goad of transportation. This, of course, is primarily the problem of the mayor.

The mayor as myth-maker

In New York City where each of the boroughs—and many towns and villages within the boroughs—gave up its own political independence in order to become part of the City of New York, a primary role for the mayor is to represent and create a sense of New York identity. The symbolic potential of a candidate seems to have weighed traditionally most heavily in the deliberations of the county leaders—particularly in the Democratic Party—in making their choice for the mayoralty.

The symbolic role of the mayors of New York City derives from the myths of the city that New York publicists like to spin about themselves. The first myth depends on the belief that New York City is the richest city in the world, that it consists of cloud-shrouded skyscrapers inhabited by glamorous creatures from the world of theater and arts, waited on by bankers and powerful businessmen. A second myth depends on the belief that New York is a magic melting pot in which poor and downtrodden peasants of a dozen different cultural strains have been transmuted into a new human type, the New Yorker. The resulting polyglot blend is all-accepting—cultural, religious, and ethnic differences having been blended into a whirligig in which the bright strains of the separate nationalities may be distinguished by the eye but not the heart. Neither myth describes the lives of flesh-and-blood New Yorkers, most of whom live outside Manhattan Island, have never seen the inside of a Broadway theater, and are likely to live beside, and associate primarily with, other New Yorkers of the same national or religious background. Still, a mayor's symbolic power depends on his ability to embody one or the other of these two myths.

The epitome of the first myth—of glamorous New York—was the candidate whom Ed Flynn, Democratic leader of the Bronx, and Judge Olvander, the then leader of Tammany Hall, picked in 1925 to succeed earnest old Mayor Hylan: James J. Walker, the majority leader of the state senate. Walker was the perfect inner-city candidate. Flynn writes in his memoirs that the decision to support Walker set the stage for the fight for control of the Democratic Party in New York City. On the one side, New York County and the Bronx—the inner-city, on the other, Kings, Queens, and Richmond—the

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outer boroughs. Walker's personality carried enough outer borough votes to give him a plurality of 420,000.

An erstwhile songwriter; entering politics only reluctantly, witty, sarcastic, urbane above all, Walker distilled the essence of the first New York myth. His friendship with theatrical people excited the population of a city which, uniquely among American cities, nursed a living theater. Young, handsome, talented, and a wastrel, he appealed to many residents in the suburban boroughs whose real interests he consistently neglected. He was Everyman's prodigal, every woman's loving profligate. Willingness to bear the pain and disappointment of watching him succumb to every temptation to which he was exposed stamped his middle-class admirers, in their own minds at least, as not merely middle class, but as true New Yorkers. One must not, however, overemphasize these charismatic fibrillations, because their span is limited. There comes a time when the basic interests of the voters overcome their emotional attachment to the thrill of being New Yorkers. Thirty-three years passed between the resignation of Mayor Walker and the emergence of another inner-city mayoral candidate who personified the glamor of the city, John V. Lindsay.

Between these two careers, Fiorello H. LaGuardia personified the other New York myth—the myth of the happy polyglot. LaGuardia bustled about the scene, raising fountains of dust and squeaking excitedly over the radio. Part Italian, part Jewish, part Catholic, part Protestant, he provided flamboyant living evidence of the effectiveness of the melting pot. LaGuardia's mythic quality won him support from among New Yorkers who had not the faintest idea of what he really accomplished as Mayor, most of which amounted to giving Mr. Robert Moses a free hand. They loved LaGuardia and rejected Moses simultaneously.

Public and private business

The notion that a mayor's most important role is that of capturing the imagination may seem to some to cheapen his importance. It is nevertheless true that the ability to personify New York makes the mayor good for business. The business is of two kinds, of course; public and private.

The mayor's mythic quality helps to determine the level at which the national government will aid New York City. A mayor who is treated by the national press as a glamorous figure is harder for the national government to rebuff than a merely competent gentleman who does not attract the newsmen, or, perhaps more important, the newswomen. It is doubtful that New York City would have acquired the Brooklyn Navy Yard from the federal government, at an extremely low rental, if Mayor Lindsay did not appear, in Washington's eyes,

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as an effective symbol of Republican determination to meet the urban crisis.

More difficult to measure, but of even greater significance to the economic health of the city, is the ability of the mayor to attract private investment. Sometimes the attraction may be exercised directly by the mayor's interest in a specific field. Mayor Lindsay, whose interest and taste for the stage bursts forth on many a public occasion, effected numerous administrative changes that made the production of professional motion pictures easier in New York City. In the end, however, the symbolic personal effectiveness of the mayor must meet the challenges of the cost accountants. They can offset the vague allures of New York's glamor by an analysis of the comparative costs involved. These accountants are also quick to draw a distinction—not so often made by political partisans of industrial development in the more squalid quarters of the city—between the desirability of a bookkeeping loss that results in a tax saving, and the undesirability of a cash loss that reduces net income and reflects on managerial talents.

With respect to industry, the mayor is himself caught in the conflict between the desire to preserve the amenities of the city and the need to encourage industrial development. The conflict is strikingly evident in the case of Consolidated Edison, New York's public utility and by far its largest taxpayer. The location of a $250 million electric generating station in the city would be an economic bonanza, bringing construction employment and payrolls, permanent jobs, and a lasting tax revenue of approximately $12.5 million per year. At the same time, however, the mayor finds that New York's intricate development has flourished thousands of nonprofit agencies dedicated to promoting separate phases of the common weal. Among them, societies dedicated to reducing air pollution and preserving urban aesthetics enthusiastically oppose new utility plants because they mean smoke and industrialized rather than picturesque waterfronts.

Because industry is often obnoxious, though needed, the symbolic mayor is frequently more effective in promoting white collar industry—the construction in New York of large office buildings that are frequently rented in advance of construction for headquarters use by the nation's largest industrial enterprises. The office building boom, which began shortly after World War II and continued since, despite two fits of depression, has now reached all-time heights. More new office space is on the drawing boards and in the bid rooms of contracting firms than at any previous period in the city's history. What has inflated New York's stature as an office capital? The usual reasons have stressed the importance of face-to-face contact between high officials of corporations and the importance of ready availability of the train of supporting services necessary to sustain corporate growth in a competitive economy: finance, law, advertising, printing.

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To these should be added the less precisely defined availability of clubs, restaurants with fine cuisine (in reputation, at any rate) memberships on distinguished eleemosynary boards to which high-ranking executives can be elected, and the world of international society. One has the impression that the decision to expand corporate offices in New York is not usually based on the same hard economics that dictate the choice of factory locations. One might well hypothesize that a mayor who colors New York with glamor —and who is also a familiar image of American corporate identity: a clean-cut Anglo-Saxon who bends to accept the black man from *noblesse oblige*—adds a measure of attraction at the time the decision is made.

New York as a "liberal" city

The second New York myth—the myth of peacefully polyglot New York—has helped to create a climate for all mayors to be able to introduce and get passed local legislation with "advanced" social views. Without cataloguing in detail the increments of New York City law that have been assembled into an imposing liberal structure, they certainly include laws for consumer protection; laws defending the right of unions to organize municipal workers; laws banning all types of discrimination in jobs, hotel and restaurant accommodations and housing, laws providing tax exemption of improvements in multiple dwellings, on condition that rents reflect the saving; laws controlling rental levels in private housing; laws granting the highest welfare benefits in the nation.

Some New Yorkers—including some New York candidates for high office, and even some mayors—apparently bemused by the large number of "liberal" laws in force, assume that the residents of the city enthusiastically accept all of the natural consequences of the liberal laws their representatives have passed. This assumption turns out to be no more applicable to New Yorkers than to any other people who pledge contributions in public only to try to retract them in private. New York City built the first public housing projects in the United States, and recently its citizens still voted yes on a public housing referendum. But this general position does not mean that a low-rent development is welcome in the backyards of semi-detached one-family homes in Queens. New York's liberalism did not, in 1967, extend to the establishment of a civilian police review board by referendum, particularly at a time when many New Yorkers were afraid to walk at night on the less-traveled streets of their city. This discovery, incidentally, was made too late to preserve Mayor Lindsay's legislative "image"—the impression, vital to a chief executive, that any proposition to which he gives his unqualified support would be supported therefore by his constituents.

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The adherence to "advanced" social views, which is the central point of the polyglot myth, does not mean that New Yorkers will give to others till they hurt themselves. The practical consequences of the myth are more subtle. First, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to seek the mayor's office without sounding convincing on the issue of one's own liberalism. Second, the general acceptance of the "advanced" views—in conversation, at least—can wildly mislead the mayor once he is in office. The absence of a serious conservative voice has sometimes led the unwary leader to believe the city to be more nearly united than it is. A mayor who takes the polyglot myth too seriously can lead the city blindly into the most frightening divisions. A division is especially ominous to the inner-city mayor, because Manhattan no longer outnumbers all the rest of the boroughs in population. Manhattan is now third, behind Queens and Brooklyn. It has lost population steadily since 1910. The balance of power has moved outward.

The mayor as lobbyist

In addition to his symbolic power, the mayor has three other arms with which to push change in the city. With one he can affect legislation; he must deal with four legislative bodies; he is actually a member of one of them, the board of estimate.

Congress is the most significant legislature through which the mayor of New York City can affect policies in his city. Since World War II, New York's mayors have sought increasingly to influence the trend of national legislation so that more help will be provided for the cities as a group, including of course New York. New York's government has opened an office in Washington, and Mayor Lindsay has on several occasions testified before congressional committees. He is usually received politely by its committees; the courtesies have a minimal effect on legislation, although sometimes his testimony before Congress does help to modify the ways in which executive departments deal with the city. Mr. Lindsay and his predecessors also have tried from time to time to treat the New York congressional delegation as a body with which to impress on their colleagues from the rest of the United States the needs of the big cities in general and New York in particular. Keeping such a coalition together on legislative matters is complicated by partisan political differences. (The coalition is most effective in its dealing with the executive branch.) No one can say with confidence that the Congress of the United States is as responsive to the wishes of mayors as to the wishes of major groups of constituents, speaking through the leaders of special interest organizations: labor, Negro organizations, trade associations. The *cities,* though we hear of them constantly, have not developed an effective lobby because no one believes that their citi-

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zens vote *en bloc*, as farmers, union members are supposed to do.

The mayor's second legislative target is Albany, where the state legislature meets to determine, among other less important matters, how much money from state taxing sources will be sent down to the city to meet specific program deficits. The mayor of New York City is at his best in the state capital when a strong governor is in the executive mansion. The support of city voters is essential to the governor's reelection, and he can be counted on to support the city's recommendations in general, subject to his ability to expand the total amount of revenue available. In Albany, the mayor is the representative of a very big lobby; he is treated with respect, and the needs of his constituency cannot easily be ignored. Only a few years ago, Mayor Lindsay obtained the governor's backing for a city income tax. Obviously, such an income tax was intended to raise money for the city budget by a progressive levy so that the richer people would pay more dollars than the poor. Because it applied to people who *worked* in the city, no matter where they *lived,* it was grossly unpopular outside the city. Nevertheless, the governor arranged for its passage despite its unpopularity, even though he and the mayor of New York were not speaking to each other at the time, the mayor having become so enraged during the early negotiations that he had withdrawn himself altogether from the discussion.

The mayor's third legislative area is the city council, where he carries more weight than in Washington, but less than in Albany. His ability to obtain legislation in the city council depends almost entirely upon his prestige in the city. If the mayor has such popular strength that an adverse word from him might endanger the re-election of the councilman, his wishes will be attended to. If he has shown himself incapable of winning votes except for his own election, the Council will feel free to resist his recommendations. It is not clear that this makes much difference to the mayor of New York City—the council rarely touches on matters of inner city-outer borough policy with which he is concerned. Nevertheless, there have been some few such issues in recent years. These include vague, general purpose legislation on fair housing and the outlawing of racial discrimination, which has had a mild effect on the availability of homes in the outer boroughs for Negroes. The council's most controversial assignment is rent control, at present New York's most persistent political issue. But because all five boroughs share the same sociological phenomenon—that there are always more tenants than landlords—the issue does not break up along borough lines. Simply because the city council cannot deal with crucial matters of controversy—not with the siting of public improvements, not with budgetary matters, not with housing policy—it fails to provide the one important function of a legislative body in a representative government. That is, a forum in which serious opponents meet under

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pressure to carry on their own government, and in which some measure of accommodation becomes not only necessary but possible.

This, on the other hand, has been the historic function of the mayor's fourth legislative body, the Board of Estimate. This board has only eight members; one represents each of the five boroughs, whereas the mayor, the president of the city council, and the comptroller, each of whom is elected by the city-wide electorate, are ex-officio members. This body has, or had, serious decisions to make, not in the passage of laws so much as in the daily business of government which, particularly on the municipal scale, is far more important and controversial. The Board of Estimate was formerly a representative legislature that did indeed provide a forum in which differences could be composed among the representatives of the boroughs. Their differences impinged on the questions with which the board was concerned: the location of public improvements, including all forms of housing which receive any measure of city subsidy; changes in the zoning resolution; special assessments for sewer installation, a subject of surpassing interest to home owners in the outer boroughs; all franchises given by the city, all leases executed by the city, and all contracts that are entered into by a process other than sealed bidding on general specifications.

Horrified by the amount of detail on the Board of Estimate calendar, the last charter revisionists endeavored to turn many of its decisions over to professionalized nonpolitical boards. The sites of public improvements, for example, are now supposed to be approved by a site selection board instead of by the Board of Estimate, thus cutting down some of the calendar which, for a single biweekly meeting, may run to 300 items, most of them blatantly routine. Removal of the site selection process for public improvements (not including housing) from the calendar was intended to speed up procedures. It has tended also to remove the most important bargaining chips from the political game, and has made political accommodation more difficult. The Board of Estimate's function in budget-making has also been reduced, also in response to a demand for program rather than line-by-line budgeting. Once again, this has reduced the power of the players, and of the seriousness of the back-and-forth negotiations between the inner-city and outer-borough representatives. Today, the Board of Estimate frequently resembles a penny ante poker game among men who had been accustomed to playing for table stakes; their wives have reformed them, and the game has lost its savor. It no longer fulfills its deepest psychological purpose—the provision of an atmosphere of real risk or danger, real costs and benefits, which makes possible the resolution of conflict by honorable compromise.

The Board of Estimate has been deflated in another sense. Its members—particularly the borough presidents—have lost control

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of their former lion's share of the family budget. Naturally, the folks at home no longer listen to them with the same respect. The reforms of past charter revisions have steadily diminished the executive power of the borough presidents, and drastically reduced the number of employees in their offices and on the work forces in the streets of their boroughs. Thus, the borough presidents have lost much of their ability to create political organizations that respond to their leadership, irrespective of the issues. Lacking the political power to enforce compromises, and having lost the legislative power to hold up the government on all but a very few of the issues that were formerly so important, the borough presidents on the Board of Estimate have lost much of their ability to create a political forum in which, trading back and forth, the mayor can, if he wishes, achieve some adjustment of the inner-city problems at the expense of the outer-borough citizens (in return, of course, for substantial concessions in other areas).

The mayor as chief employer

The inner-city mayor should be able to achieve gains for his constituency by exercise of another power—his power as the city's chief employer. Simply because he is chief employer—with immense powers of appointment over his executive officers and those on the echelons below him—he should be able to put into office men who will place the inner-city goal of civil peace at the top of the agenda. The mayor has the power of appointing commissioners of all of the city departments and of many of the chairmen of the city's commissions board, and authorities. As their stated terms expire, he can replace the ordinary incumbents of these same boards and commissions with people of his own choice.

The inner-city mayor should be able to favor civil peace and improve the condition of the poor, not only by appointing the chiefs under his control, but by winning the loyalty of those who work in the agencies. He, after all, establishes the conditions under which the employees work. This should, one supposes, lead to close relationships with the leaders of the unions with which he is in daily contact. Mayor Robert F. Wagner worked these furrows of loyalty until they were plucked clean of weeds, and managed to defer payment of a number of due bills held against the city government. Mayor Lindsay, who had to cope with these bills, was not so lucky. It also seems clear that he never quite understood what the process was all about, and what role a mayor could or should play.

It is, after all, the principle of the unions that they exist primarily to protect their present members, not to attract future members and to favor these over the old breed. This, unfortunately, slows up the normal municipal practice of gaining civic peace by turning over

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the least attractive working fiefdom of city government to the newest arrivals. The teachers' union is a splendid example of the slowing effect of unionization on the acceptance of the new arrival, not because the union itself in any way discriminates against the new arrival, but because the union has helped to make working conditions (pay, primarily; vacations and tenure, secondarily) sufficiently attractive to hold the last previous arrival group. Without the improvements, they would have moved to more promising areas in the economy. The community control hoolarium of the past year makes almost inevitable the movement of the older teachers out of that profession, at least, in New York City, and into other professions or other posts. Ultimately, then, the beneficiaries of the union's intransigent defense of the union-imposed salary and tenure principles will be the new Negro teachers to whom the union is at present anathema. But this transition need never have been so turbulent and painful as will now be the case. Decentralization of education should have been equally popular in the inner city and the outer boroughs, because it held out the promise of providing what each wanted: no change in the outer boroughs, and civil peace through the advancement of newcomers in the inner city. The mayor's acquiescence in the staging of an experiment in Ocean Hill-Brownsville—predictably the most intransigent of areas—derailed the entire program.

The Negroes may now, it is true, move more quickly into educational jobs than they would have. But the bitterness of the decentralization battle will make it far more difficult to advance elsewhere. The unions in the longer-established municipal departments are now alarmed by the extravagant claims and noisy threats of some of the Negro leaders. And the more the mayor sides with the newcomers in attempting to open up new opportunities in the older departments, the greater the resentment and resistance he encounters.

One strategy of the inner-city mayor has always been the expansion of employment in the *newer* fields of municipal services. Thus, the hospital workers are now in great part Puerto Rican and Negro. They have been able to raise the standard of pay in this heretofore neglected sector of city service to the point of near-respectability. Unfortunately for the mayor, who would like to cool things off in the central city by pushing these pay scales higher, the older unions are now in no mood to be accommodating. They demand that traditional differentials in pay be maintained; if the mayor pushes the laggards, he pushes the leaders as well, and he doesn't have the money to push everyone up the economic ladder. Moreover, the members of these older unions now consist largely of middle-class New Yorkers, inhabiting the outer boroughs. So the conflict is beginning to affect the very geographical unity of the city.

Ironically, the mayor scarcely improves his standing with the people he is trying to help—the inner-city poor—when he opens new

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city departments under new federal grants such as OEO and model cities programs. The beneficiaries give the federal government credit for the money they get, while blaming the shortcomings of the program on the local "power structure," which may mean anything and usually does mean the mayor. His doorstep, unfortunately, remains but a short bus or subway ride from his constituents, and the strategy of sit-ins and confrontations, so effective in building up "community" sentiment, operates at the same time to undermine the standing of the mayor both with the inner-city people he wants to help and the outer-borough citizens whom he must placate in order to do so. What the mayor does directly to help the new arrivals, in short, no longer strengthens him politically, as it did in the days described by Boss Croker. For all the energy he has expended on their behalf, Mayor Lindsay cannot count on any solid black vote.

The costs of "good government"

In his chief employer's role of finding effective commissions to head his departments, the mayor would seem to have every chance to win enthusiastic support in the outer boroughs that are traditionally interested in good government. Unfortunately, the mayor of New York must choose his commissioners within a network of pressures and constraints that make even harder a job that is hard enough to start with. The continuing centralization of authority in the mayor's office—the product of repeated charter revisions by reform theoreticians—has given the top commissioners so many responsibilities that they can scarcely be expected to learn how to discharge them in the brief time they are likely to be in office. The principle of political loyalty in the appointment of high officials continues, as it must if political parties themselves are to be able to hold out any reason for loyal attachment by their members. But the present supporters of an inner-city mayor—as noted by Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson in their *City Politics*—are likely not to be "politicians" in the traditional sense, which is to say longtime adherents to the principle that no unnecessary enemies should be made. Instead, they are more likely to be young men who have supported the mayor from ideological convictions that "change" is good or "moral." They have qualities which might be superbly effective in a serious legislative chamber, but they enter upon the job of enforcing the building and housing codes, cleaning the streets, running the city hospitals, or even administering the parks with the idea of imposing an extraneous criterion on the work of the department which they are to supervise. Sometimes, as in the case of Mayor Lindsay's first buildings commissioner, the stated objective is to "eliminate all graft and corruption from this department." This announcement naturally brings the editorial writers to their feet

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applauding, but it succeeds immediately in offending all of the senior civil servants in the department without whose cooperative support any improvement in service is impossible.

Further, the objective of reducing graft and corruption, while laudable, does not necessarily depend on the stern and implacable posture of the commissioner, who cannot, in any case, follow each of hundreds of inspectors on his daily rounds or visits to his safe deposit boxes. Graft and corruption in a buildings department are frequently a symptom of excessive and unreasonable enforcement standards. Those natural thieves among the inspectors who steal without the need for rationalization are greatly outnumbered by borderline inspectors who tell themselves that the bribes they accept really compensate them for the risk of breaking the written law to place a reasonable construction on it. This does not mean that graft is to be condoned; it does mean that a sound administrator begins with an analysis of the reasons for its pervasiveness, and quietly develops and prunes away the enforcement of those regulations that do not seriously affect livability in the housing accommodations of the city. The ideological splendor of the new commissioner who announces his brave commitment to "change" too often comes to a disastrous end: if he suggests that he wants to throw the book at his inspectors, they pick it up and toss it at the owners of buildings. This means that so many violations are reported—most of them meaningless—that the departmental computers stagger under the load. If the new commissioner starts with a ringing denunciation of the bureaucracy in his department, the bureaucracy gets even with him by accepting his new priority—"community control in the ghetto"—long before any of the sub-professionals hired to execute it have become competent to do their job. If he proclaims that streets in the slums will be kept as clean as Park Avenue, no matter how many times they will have to be swept in order to keep them clean, his career officials will delightedly take him at his word, leaving him alone to face the angry consequences of the resulting reconcentration of forces.

These comments should not be read to imply that Harlem streets should be neglected to polish up the respectable façades of the city. In fact, New York's Department of Sanitation claims to collect garbage far more frequently in the slums than in the wealthier parts of the city, where, of course, there are better janitor services, more garbage cans, and more room to store them. It does mean that ideology in practical affairs must cut its hypotheses to fit its budget. The city commissioner who does not know this on taking office, ultimately learns it. With this knowledge comes the realization that he has accepted the wrong job. He does not belong in city administration but perhaps in the better-insulated atmosphere of the District of Columbia. Once having come to know himself, the

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administrator frequently resigns to run as a legislator or to return to the private practice of law. Before another administrator can be found who can slide through the realistic political filter of ethnic balance and variety, the performance of the department will have deteriorated.

Thus, the very drives that motivate the inner-city mayor erode his chances for winning outer borough support through a demonstration of increased efficiency. When one adds other problems that are common to municipal administration everywhere, one cannot escape the feeling that the level of city services in New York will continue to decline, except in those special areas where the federal government has indicated major financial support.

The mayor as umpire

Lacking the bargaining power that transit decisions once gave to his predecessors, lacking the power to legislate bounteous plenty from the state or nation, and finally, we have seen, lacking the power to win adherence of the outer boroughs by running the entire city better, the mayor's most hopeful remaining strategy is that of umpire. If he seeks to win inner-city objectives—better job opportunities for the newcomers, their physical distribution through the outer boroughs (including the construction of government-owned or assisted housing), or the preferment of newcomers to important commissionerships in the older city departments—the mayor must establish himself as a peacemaker, equally devoted to all of the objectives of the city, inner and outer boroughs alike. This requires painstaking familiarity with the language as well as the strategic goals of the city's myriad constituencies. In New York City, this demands most particular knowledge of specific areas, the ability to distinguish between the majority sentiment in those areas and the highly vocal expressions of plausible "community leaders" who may not in fact represent anyone but themselves. It requires the patience to run for office without making promises impossible to keep, and the forbearance to withstand the inevitable barrage of criticism for not being sufficiently forthright, nor for having made a deep enough "commitment" to creating "a change in the quality" of urban life.

The greater his willingness to adopt the more-or-less neutral status of umpire, the more an inner-city mayor has been able to make the outer boroughs accede to the needs of a new inner-city population. Though it is true that the resistance to deliberate government shifting of low-income families into middle-class neighborhoods remains adamant, the mayor who gains the reputation of dealing with these questions fairly may succeed in placing some, without stimulating violent opposition. The mayor as umpire would,

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of course, concentrate on those steps in aid of the inner-city strategy that would be least likely to stir up the opposition of the outer boroughs and that, to an equivalent extent, would be least likely to satisfy the most absolutist of his followers. He shrinks from adopting the policy of reverse discrimination, a strategy which, of course, immediately would disqualify him as umpire in the eyes of those now to be discriminated against for the benefit of those formerly discriminated against.

The trouble with the mayor as umpire is the dullness of the role. Who cheers for him? Current language is not the language of moderation. In a period when every hack editorial writer cries for "commitment" and "innovative responses," the umpire with his dark blue suit and pocket whiskbroom seems as irrelevant (to use the crucial word) as Alexander Throttlebottom. Even those who oppose change are likely now to believe that mere neutrality will fail to head off disaster.

If none of the strategies that can be devised in New York will work to bring the outer boroughs to the service of the inner city, we would appear to be in a desperate condition, unable now to meet the perennial challenge, the assimilation of the newcomers. If the present intemperance of language presages a total breakdown of the civil peace, the situation may indeed be desperate. The city may be about to face a nightmare outbreak of violence and intraurban warfare. But this ultimate disintegration will not necessarily take place. Those who use violent language often do not seem to mean exactly what they have been saying, while those who cheer them frequently do so simply because they feel that the indignities the speakers promise to visit upon their white near-neighbors are only fantasies. If, by chance, the city survives this clear and present danger, all may not be so hopeless as it appears. If the cities do not, in fact, burn up, the umpire-mayor will be justified in telling himself that the power of government, most particularly local government, is truly limited. Because governmental power in New York City will *not* have been the most important factor in changing the lives of its inhabitants, even its black inhabitants. Private employment for Negro men and women in New York is growing at a rapid rate. The subways are filled in the morning with young Negroes going to work in the offices downtown; not as cleaning women or elevator operators, but as secretaries, office help, and, increasingly, as junior and even senior executives. This process is certainly not going fast enough to please anyone; such processes never do. But *that* is what is really happening in New York.

Although no one should underestimate the risk of reckless language, American life would have to take a strange twist if the suburbs are to come to the aid of the central city any differently in the future than they have in the past. If the outer boroughs are to

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grant the inner-city Negro living room, it seems probable that the Negro most likely to receive the grant is the Negro who most resembles, in education and social class, the white family that preceded him. Just as the outer-borough neighborhoods of New York are characteristically homogeneous in religion or national origin today, so there will be more outer-borough neighborhoods with Negro middle-class populations, such as St. Albans in Queens. Ultimately, it would appear that by taking a public commitment to aid the inner-city people at the expense of his impartiality, the mayor of New York can harm the adaptive process far more than he can help it. Perhaps this, and not simple fatigue from the horrendous rigors of the job, explains why New York mayors—no matter what their initial charge—tend to become umpires after they have been in office for some time. Such acceptance of the limits of his office may be the city's greatest hope.

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THE MAYOR'S DILEMMAS: II

The mayors vs. the cities

JAMES Q. WILSON

So accustomed have we become to the daily dispatches from the urban battlefront—reports of perpetual crisis, the descriptions of mayors struggling in vain against seemingly hopeless odds, the ominous warnings of growing frustrations and anger—that we are in danger of taking for granted, as though they were part of the natural order, some rather remarkable developments. By the standards of any other era, what is happening today—or more precisely, what is *not* happening—needs to be explained.

Consider: Despite the fact that ghetto riots have torn scores of cities and that rising rates of violent crime have afflicted even more, and despite the fact that George Wallace revealed by his campaign that there are millions of Americans ready for a hard-line, get-tough policy on civil disorder, there are few big-city mayors—Los Angeles in this, as in other respects, is an exception—who publicly endorse this approach or who act as if they thought there was any political mileage in it. In New York, Boston, Detroit, San Francisco, Atlanta, and many other cities, the mayors, far from trying to put together a political base out of white "law-and-order" sentiments, are repudiating this strategy and continuing to argue for meliorative measures designed to better the lot of the poor and the black. Though every public opinion poll shows Americans, especially but not wholly white Americans, to be deeply troubled and angered by crime and dis-

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order, and though every group of organized police officers are demanding that the mayors "unleash" them; and though there is usually a primary opponent in the wings, waiting to run against "crime in the streets"—nevertheless the standard reply of the mayors has been to deplore violence, to call for renewed efforts to eliminate its causes, and to attack overzealousness about this issue as a form of disguised racism. Finally, a "law-and-order" candidate in office rarely maintains the "hard line" that got him there; Sam Yorty, since reelection, has been speaking far more softly and sociologically than he campaigned. So, it can be predicted, will Marchi or Procaccino, if either of these gentlemen is elected Mayor of New York.

Consider also: Whenever a clear choice confronts a mayor, he tends (again, especially in the big cities) to side with the liberal (though rarely the radical) side even when the liberal side appears to be widely unpopular. John Lindsay favored a civilian review board for the police, though any sounding of opinion would have shown that the vast majority of New York voters were strongly opposed to the board. Joseph Aliota became, as mayor, a backer of the police-community relations unit of the San Francisco police department even though the unit was detested by many, probably most, San Francisco officers and criticized by many civilians for allegedly "siding with the criminals" against the police. The response of Jerome Cavanagh to the fearful riot in Detroit was to appoint and actively support a "New Detroit Committee" that consulted with (though did not satisfy) the most militant blacks and urged programs and patience rather than tanks and toughness. And he did this though he was facing an organized campaign among white voters to recall him from office for alleged failures to curb rising crime (by which the petitioners meant, of course, rising *Negro* crime).

Consider finally: Though municipal tax rates have been steadily rising and though the "revolt of the taxpayers" is often predicted and indeed sometimes occurs, the "new breed' mayors are rarely, if ever, fiscal conservatives. Instead, they launch new programs and raise property and other taxes to new highs, despite the fact that one reason they defeated their predecessor may have been that he seemed to be responsible for a tax level the voters found unacceptable. Of course, many of the subsequent increases result from forces over which no mayor has any control—legislatively mandated pay raises for city workers, for example—but some substantial part of the boost is caused by the fact the mayor is innovative and program-oriented rather than single-mindedly tax-conscious.

Finding explanations

One possible explanation for these apparent paradoxes is that acting other than as the mayors do would be politically risky. A tough

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law-and-order posture would alienate Negro voters and a failure to improve services (even at the cost of higher taxes) would alienate white homeowners. But in many of these cities with the most conspicuously "new breed" mayors—Boston, New York, San Francisco —the black vote is but a small fraction of the total (in Boston, for example, it is probably less than 10 per cent of the whole and in New York and San Francisco, it could not be much more). And in some of these cities, as well as in cities (such as Detroit) where Negroes are a much larger fraction of the population, persons get elected to the city councils on the basis of much more conservative images, even though they run at large and thus have exactly the same constituencies as does the mayor.

Nor can it be said that the present strategy of the more progressive mayors confers any obvious political rewards. At this writing, the probability of Lindsay's reelection hardly seems overwhelming. The common complaint of (white) New York voters seems to be that he "gives too much to the Negroes" (though, naturally, Negroes may feel that they have in fact received very little). And Cavanagh in Detroit did not appear to enhance his shaky political position with the steps he took after the riot—indeed, for many voters he probably worsened it. By contrast, Mayor Richard Daley in Chicago won a great deal of support by his tough line during and after the police clashes with demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention.

Of course, chance may play some part in deciding who gets to be mayor. After all, Louise Day Hicks campaigned in Boston in a way that attracted strong support from the police, from opponents of measures designed to further school integration, and from many victims of the city's chronically high tax rate. She led the field in the preliminary election and ran a quite respectable second in the elimination round. If she had not been a woman and if some campaign breaks had gone her way, she might well be the mayor of Boston. But what is striking is not that she lost, but that Kevin White, who won, did not operate the mayor's office in a way obviously calculated to win over to him the voters who opposed him. One of his first acts was an effort (aborted by premature publicity) to replace the police commissioner; subsequently, he announced some of the largest tax increases any Boston mayor has ever had to take responsibility for. And other measures intended to help the lot of Boston Negroes have earned for him, in certain neighborhoods, the unflattering nickname of "Mayor Black."

To some persons, finding explanations for why mayors act as they do is unnecessary, or rather the explanation is obvious—these officials are courageous, right-thinking persons who deeply believe in what they are doing and are willing to take the blame for having done it. There is no doubt a good deal of truth in this view, but it does not seem adequate. These mayors are also intelligent, and they

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would have little to lose by deciding that discretion is the better part of valor. Given the heavy law-and-order majorities in many cities, one would expect even the most forward-looking chief executive to at least talk tough if only to win breathing space for himself and perhaps some consent for the programs he seeks to carry out. Most liberal mayors face no threat from the left (the Negroes have no realistic alternative), but they do face serious threats from the right. Yet the center-seeking tendencies of state and national candidates seems not to be duplicated at the big-city level. Hubert Humphrey as well as Richard Nixon found it important to have firm law-and-order (or "order-and-justice") positions; anybody running against Ronald Reagan in California would be foolish indeed to assume that he would improve his chances of election by departing radically from Reagan's position on student unrest, welfare programs, or crime in the streets. The best he could hope for would be to display a difference in emphasis sufficient to acquire votes on the left while keeping his losses in the center and on the right to a minimum.

A new era in city politics?

I would suggest that there is a general, structural reason for the behavior of many big-city mayors, a reason that, if correct, implies the arrival of a new era in city politics, one unlike either the era of the political machine or that of conventional political reform. For many mayors today, and perhaps for some time to come, their *audience* is increasingly different from their *constituency*. By "audience" I mean those persons whose favorable attitudes and responses the mayor is most interested in, those persons from whom he receives his most welcome applause and his most needed resources and opportunities. By "constituency" I mean those people who can vote for or against him in an election.

At one time, audience and constituency were very nearly the same thing. The mayor was reelected if he pleased his party and the city's voters, or at least a substantial number of the wards and factions making up these voters. The only resources he needed (money to finance his campaign and taxes with which to run the city) were available from city interests. The only help he needed was from party workers who not only staffed his campaign but his government as well. From time to time, the highly partisan, machine-style mayor would be replaced by a nonpartisan or reform mayor, but for him, too, audience and constituency were similar. His constituents were those voters (temporarily a majority) who were disgusted by scandal or bored by sameness; his audiences were essentially *local* reformers—business groups, good government or "municipal research bureau" organizations, and crusading big-city newspapers.

With the decline of the urban political party and with the decline

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in the vitality and money resources of the central city, postwar mayors began to look to new sources for both support and issues. Many found them in urban redevelopment. Business and planning groups were concerned about the fate of the downtown business district and willing to back mayors who promised to do something. But many, if not most, of these supporters had themselves moved outside the city limits, and a large part of the bill for the new improvements was to be paid by the federal government with grants directly to the cities (and not, as with traditional programs, funnelled through the states). In this period, the separation between audience and constituency began. The mayor was elected by city residents, but he campaigned through the help of—and in part with the intention of influencing—businessmen, planners, and federal agencies.

In the 1960's, the primarily physical emphasis of the urban renewal program fell under strong criticism, and new needs, chiefly involving problems of poverty and racial isolation, came to the fore. The new concerns were nonbusiness, and to a degree antibusiness, though businessmen later joined in some of the programs created, especially those having to do with employment. But this shift in substantive focus to social issues was not so much a reassertion of the concerns of constituents as it was a change in the composition of the audience. To be sure, the riots were chiefly the acts of a certain group of constituents, but these disturbances, though they imparted a special sense of urgency to urban concerns, did not create them. The model cities program, the war on poverty, most civil rights bills, the aid of education programs, and the various pilot projects of both the government and private foundations were largely devised, promoted, and staffed by groups who were becoming the mayor's audience though they were not among his constituents.

This audience consists principally of various federal agencies, especially those that give grants directly to cities; the large foundadations, and in particular the Ford Foundation, that can favor the mayor with grants, advice, and future prospects; the mass media, or at least that part of the media—national news magazines and network television—that can give the mayor access to the suburbs, the state, and the nation as a whole; and the affluent (and often liberal) suburban voters who will pass on the mayor's fitness for higher office.

No mayor can afford to cater to this audience to the exclusion of constituency interests nor is the audience always in agreement as to what it will applaud. But to a growing degree, the audience is the source of important cues and rewards that tend, however much they may conflict in detail, to be on the whole consistent. First of all, the audience sets the tone and provides much of the rhetoric for the discussion of urban issues. Indeed, it often decides what *is* an urban issue. At one time, taxes and the fate of the central business district

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were the issues; then housing became more important; juvenile delinquency enjoyed a brief vogue and now seems to be coming back for an encore; poverty and race have been the most recent issues, though while the "race problem" was once thought to require removing the barriers to integration, it is now more likely to be seen in terms of "community control" and "neighborhood action" (neither of which will do much at all for integration). "Talking the language" of the audience is an important way for a mayor to win esteem and to become a state or even national figure.

The audience has power

But more than esteem is at stake. The audience also controls much of the free resources that a mayor needs so urgently, given his pinched tax base, the rising demand for services, and the shortage of able people to staff city hall. The great bulk of any city's budget is, in effect, a fixed charge the mayor is powerless to alter more than trivially. He must pay the policemen, firemen, and sanitation workers; he must service the municipal debt; and he must meet his share of welfare and educational costs. After he does these things, there is not much left over to play around with. If he is to be "innovative," or even if he is to respond to any new demands, he must find new money and, equally important, more staff people. The federal government is obviously one source of new money, but is not always available—at least in large amounts—just for the asking. If the mayor wants his city to be a "model city" or if he wants a generously funded poverty program, it helps if he is thought, by the relevant agency, to be a "good mayor" with "ideas" and the "right approach." Such decisions are not made so much in traditional political terms—Congress, for example, may have little collective influence on these allocations though substantial influence in particular cases involving particular members—but in terms of bureaucratic politics in which most of the persons involved do not think of themselves as politicians at all. Undersecretaries and assistant secretaries and bureau administrators and (often of greatest importance) the personal assistants to department heads decide whom among the mayors they can "talk to."

Nor is the money always used wholly for the stated purposes. Cities such as Boston and New Haven that had vigorous urban renewal programs had them in part to get federal funds for the city but also in part to create within the city, but outside the normal departmental structure, a large staff of professional talent that could be used for any number of purposes. The best local renewal authorities become generalized sources of innovation and policy staffing, and their directors become in effect deputy mayors (and sometimes more than that).

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Foundations and private organizations can also provide free resources that, though small in amount compared to federal largesse, can often make the difference between running an "ordinary" administration and running one that is newsworthy, exciting, or "different." The Ford Foundation "Gray Areas" program was for a while a systematic effort at serving, however unintentionally, just this function. (Many mayors later decided that what they really wanted was the attention that came from *announcing* the program, not the often less flattering attention that came from trying to *run* it. The ideal "pilot project" from the mayor's point of view is one that puts some money into the city treasury, gets some good headlines, provides a few more staff assistants, and then promptly vanishes without a trace before anyone can start quarreling about what purpose it is to serve or who should control it.)

The audience is just as important as a source of skills. For all the talk about cities being "where it's at," very few able administrators seek out employment in the low-prestige, low-paying jobs that city hall has to offer. There are such people, but they are small in number and young in age. To get the best of them, or even to get any at all, every big-city mayor is in competition with every other one. The mayor that runs (however well advised) a "business-as-usual" administration is at a profound disadvantage in this competition. Indeed, the would-be mayor must often start seeking them out when he decides to run for office so that they can give him the speeches, the position papers, and the "task force reports" that increasingly are the hallmark of a campaign that wins the sympathy of the media. The process of tuning the mayor to be responsive to the audience begins, therefore, even before he becomes mayor. And if he should ever entertain any thoughts about taking a "tough line" or going after the "backlash vote" (however rational such a strategy might be), he would immediately face a rebellion among his younger campaign and staff assistants.

The new upward mobility

Finally, the audience is increasingly able to reward and thus shape the career aspirations of the big-city mayor. There was a time when being mayor was a dead-end street, and in terms of advancing to higher elective office, it may still be. Cavanagh could not win his own party's nomination, to say nothing of the Senate seat, even when he was still enjoying the unstinting praise of the media and the tranquility of preriot Detroit. Kevin White of Boston appears eager to run for governor in 1970, but many are skeptical that he can get either the nomination or the office. (His predecessor, John Collins, tried for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator but in the primary election failed even to carry his own city, Boston.)

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This may be changing, however, as more public attention is focused on cities, and if the mayor is adroit enough to get out of city hall and into a safer office before criticisms begin to mount up.

But higher elective office is no longer the only place for an ex-mayor to go. Today he can reasonably hope—*if* he is in good standing with the audience—to be offered an important Washington assignment, to join a private organization or foundation working in the urban field, or at least to acquire some sort of professorship that will sustain him, offer him a chance to gather his thoughts, and provide a base from which he can seek consulting opportunities (and fees). If he had his choice, of course, almost any mayor would prefer public office to the relative obscurity of private action; one must have a powerful love of politics even to think seriously of running for mayor in the first place. But whereas former mayors once had a choice among higher elective office (sometimes shabby), idleness, or at best a low-paying judgeship or post as recorder of deeds, now they can be fairly sure that they can join the board of a corporation doing business in cities or the ranks of the nonprofit (but not necessarily unrewarding) foundations, alliances, coalitions, institutes, and centers. Sure, that is, if their credentials are in order with the audience that has created and sustains such enterprises.

Opposed perspectives

It is important not to overstate the point. "New-style" mayors are no more engaged in the single-minded pursuit of audience acclaim than "old-style" mayors were preoccupied with winning constituency votes. The former clearly need votes, too, and the latter were at least partially concerned with "respectability." And in either case, no one theory can possibly explain all the actions undertaken at city hall—every mayor of any style responds to a complex set of external pressures and personal judgments that cannot be summarized as mere self-interest, however conceived.

Furthermore, the behavior rewarded by the audience changes from time to time. Once, urban renewal was the favored policy, but that is no longer the case. Today, influential parts of the audience are concerned about neighborhood representation, community control, and governmental decentralization. Many mayors are hoping that there is now a substantial overlap between audience concerns and constituency interests and accordingly are betting heavily on "little city halls," neighborhood service centers, and school decentralization. The audience is now reacting against the excesses of urban renewal—its orientation to the central business district and to land clearance—and is developing a concern for neighborhood integrity and local public services that can reinforce the obvious interest constituents have in just such matters.

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The congruence of interest may be real; at the very least, it tends to obscure the differences, described in exaggerated terms earlier in this article, between audience and constituency. Obscures, but does not eliminate, for the two groups act out of fundamentally different motives and with quite opposed perspectives on what a "neighborhood orientation" is supposed to achieve. The audience, though it may give lip service to neighborhood benefits and decentralization in general, is primarily interested in such things for the poor and the black, especially the latter; the constituency, or at least its white majority, sees a neighborhood orientation as meaning getting help from city hall to hold down taxes, provide more police, and keep black children from being "forcibly" (i.e., by busing or redistricting) brought into their schools. "Community control" to many elements of the audience means Negro control; to many central-city white constituents, it means anti-Negro control. In the reaction against the disadvantages of the era of mayor-backed urban renewal and highway projects, some of the compensating advantages of a city-wide perspective were lost sight of. Taking influence over decisions away from neighborhoods meant preventing them from acquiring governmental power to use against one another, admittedly at a price in decreased responsiveness to local interests.

Managing a city government so that it is receptive to legitimate neighborhood concerns and unreceptive to illegitimate ones is difficult under the best of circumstances, but especially trying when the consensus as to what is legitimate has begun to disintegrate. In New York City, Jewish voters, who are normally warm supporters of any mayor who seems forward-looking, liberal, and honest, have been plunged into a state hovering between confusion and fury by the discovery that school decentralization seemed to mean allowing black militants to harass Jewish teachers and a Jewish-led teachers' union. As a result, a part of the audience that might ordinarily think decentralization is a good idea has defected from its ranks. (It is interesting to speculate what their attitude might have been if community control had come first to the police instead of the schools. They might have regarded it—as they did the civilian review board —as a threat to "law and order" or they might have ignored it as a threat only to Irish police and an Irish policeman's union.)

In short, though present mayors seem to be neighborhood-oriented and thus constituency-oriented, the style and to a degree the substance of that orientation is heavily influenced by audience rather than constituency concerns: it favors social experimentation and innovation, it gives special attention to the interests of black citizens, and it treats gingerly (if at all) local demands for a strong law-enforcement policy. It does not follow, of course, that the supposed beneficiaries of this policy, the blacks, see themselves as having benefited. They are no doubt likely to give strong political

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support to the present mayors in New York, Boston, and elsewhere, but many of their leaders feel that the neighborhood orientation, though in general desirable, has delivered rather little in the way of concrete gains and that it may in fact have raised neighborhoood expectations unrealistically.

Benefits and costs

The advantages of the growing influence of the mayor's audience should not be underestimated. The reasons for the importance of the audience—its control of important resources in money and talent—are directly related to the needs of the cities. At a time when new funds are hard to find and able people hard to entice, one is prepared to look kindly on almost any strategy that will provide more of either. Indeed, the role of the audience may be important in getting some men to run for mayor in the first place. When city hall seems to be both a political dead end and an institutionalized nightmare, audience support and interest may be critical as an inducement for attracting at least certain kinds of talent to mayoral elections. (I do not wish to exaggerate this point. With no audience interest whatsoever, there would still be a surprising number of candidates for the special purgatory that is city hall. Ambition has probably led to the ruination of more men than lust.)

Above all, the audience has played a critical role in preventing (or since history is yet to run its course, slowing) the emergence of an urban nativism that would exploit base emotions and encourage vindictive sentiments. Without the increase in the number of big-city Negro voters as well as the increased salience of a liberal, city-oriented audience, there would surely have been a large number of candidates and officials making racist (in the strict sense) appeals to white voters.

But the advantages should not blind us to the costs of audience involvement. Its members, because they rarely have anything personally at stake in big-city politics, attach rather little value to stability and order and a high value to experimentation and change. Furthermore, because they have little direct experience with the results of programs, they are likely to be relatively uncritical of what is new (newness suggests initiative, concern, action) but highly critical of what exists (oldness suggests the status quo, passivity, and indifference). And since few members of audience need take (in the usual case) responsibility for any programs, the audience as a whole is generally unaware of, or unconcerned with, the failure of earlier ideas it had once endorsed. If a bold new program falls flat on its face, that fact is either unremarked or taken as a sign that what is needed next time is a program that is even newer and bolder.

There is also a tendency for the mayors, in responding to audience

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concerns, to accelerate the rate of increase in unrealizable expectations. The new mayors are under considerable pressure to out-promise each other (at least initially), but, because they can rarely deliver on these promises, they may leave a legacy of frustration and cynicism. This would be true, of course, even if the audience did not exist—candidates always tell voters what they want to hear, even if what they want is utterly impossible. But the audience exacerbates this tendency. By making mayors rival claimants for media attention and federal largesse, it induces a mayor to bid against mayors in other cities as well as opponents in his own. Mayors must now not only out-promise challengers with respect to what the constituents want, but out-promise them with respect to what the audience wants as well.

To be sure, the audience-oriented mayors occasionally succeed. A riot may (apparently) be prevented, or a public agency usefully reorganized, or a new service installed. When that happens, it is often as much the result of luck and particular circumstances as of style and skill. But a success in one place, and for reasons unique to that place, encourages others to believe that similar successes are possible in other places. The audience generalizes the example of the single mayor and makes him the model for all mayors. Everywhere, one hears of persons who are running or acting in the "Lindsay style" as if that style were both an unqualified blessing and an exportable commodity. Television commentators, who are especially prone to conceptualize public events in stylistic terms, owing in great part to their own needs to attract audience interest with one- or two-minute film clips, are particularly likely to seize on a "good style" (good, they believe, for both their entertainment needs as well as for public problems) and measure other persons by that standard.

One group of mayors may be exempt from the dilemmas of pleasing both constituency and audience. The black mayors, at least for the time being, enjoy a guaranteed audience with instinctively favorable reactions. Being black, they attract the sympathetic attention of the media, the foundations, the federal agencies, and most liberal voters. Grants for special purposes and designations as "model cities" are likely to come fairly easily for such mayors. To the extent they can take audience support for granted, they are free to turn their attention to constituency problems, and, in dealing with these constituents, can afford to promise less. (Partially offsetting their freedom is the greater criticism from white voters and the higher expectations of black ones within their cities.)

Demography and authority

All the foregoing is said, not in criticism of mayors, but in sympathy for their plight. The audience, after all, is almost as ready as

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the constituency to criticize a mayor who fails to conform to their expectations. When a man is elected with an audience-acclaimed style and then, within a few weeks, begins speaking prosaically about the tax rate and the demands of the organized city employees, he begins to disenchant his audience who thought that he was somehow "above that sort of thing." And he, in turn, can be pardoned for becoming exasperated at the unreasonable demands of his vicarious voters, the unfranchised audience.

At the root of his difficulties are demography and authority: the liberal voters have moved out of the city without relinquishing their claim to share in its governance, and the process of governing has been made immeasurably more difficult by the inability of the mayor to acquire enough power to manage an increasingly intense conflict. There has been a simultaneous growth in the problems of central cities and a decline in the authority of the mayor to handle those problems. Among the many crises, real and imagined, that are the lot of cities these days, should be numbered the crisis of authority.

The mayor is increasingly unable to control his own bureaucracy owing to the growth both in its size and in the strength of its protective devices (civil service and employee organizations). He increasingly finds that there are no political parties capable of producing stable governing majorities on the city councils. And he increasingly confronts issues that are of such fundamental importance or laden with such symbolic significance that they cannot be resolved by the normal processes of bargaining and modest revenue reallocations—crime, racial conflict, and civil disorder. It is not surprising that, faced with these difficulties, he should seek allies and help wherever he can find them. Thus, when a national commission blames urban riots on "white racism," the mayors of the cities where those riots occurred hastened to agree with this diagnosis—partly because they may think it is right, but more importantly because they see the acceptance of this verdict as a useful means for placing a moral obligation on the federal government to send more financial aid to the cities.

The situation that results is inherently unstable. If the resources to govern can only be obtained by the mayor joining his audience in characterizing white big-city voters in terms the latter reject as untrue and unfair, these constituents are likely quickly to lose patience. If, on the other hand, no resources are to be had from any source, black voters are also likely to lose patience. Newsworthy "happenings," theatrical events, and walking tours of the slums may divert attention from these dilemmas, but they are unlikely to resolve them. (There is something to be said for even a diversion, of course. The vitriolic mayorality campaign in Boston in 1967 was less divisive than otherwise owing, I believe, to the preoccupation of the

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voters with the dramatic Red Sox pennant race, and the tense Detroit summer of 1968 did not become explosive partly because the Tigers, by winning the pennant and the World Series, were a unifying influence. Unfortunately, only two teams can win pennants each year.)

There is little comfort and even less guidance to be drawn from these somber reflections. If there were a better way to do things, no doubt some mayor would by now have found it. What seems clear, however, is that the "new breed" mayors—of whom John Lindsay is perhaps the archetype—are new in more senses than one. They are not simply new personalities or new styles, they are responses to important underlying shifts in the distribution of influence in American urban politics—shifts that have brought new sources of power to bear on cities as, indeed, they have brought such sources to bear on the country generally. Urban politics have become, in significant degree, nationalized.

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NEWSREEL

An East Village story: I

In the decaying tenements of the lower east side today—in that section that real estate agents renamed "East Village" in the hope of raising rents—lives a motley throng of beats, hippies, acid heads, dope-pushers, bikies, yippies, and crazies. At another time, Karl Marx described the originals "alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jail-birds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni,* pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *mackereaux,* brothel-keepers, porters, *literati,* organ grinders, rag-pickers, knife-grinders, tinkers, beggars, in short the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la Bohème. . . .*"

In France, this lumpenproletariat became the street mobs of the Society of December 10, the rioting forces by which Louis Napoleon came to power. On the lower east side, these lumpenintellectuals form the extreme left of the conglomeration of assorted radicals, peaceniks, Trotskyites, Maoists, Debrayists, axis-praxis "new working class" tendency, and other flowers of the New Left. What unites the different *groupescules* of the lumpenintellectuals is their scorn for ideas and for talk. Ideas are "shit" and talk is "piss." What they seek to do is to *act.* Acting usually means simply stopping other people from talking and breaking up meetings, preferably, of course, of liberals, intellectuals, and other radicals who want to debate ideas and whose mode of action is talk.

The following "clips" are some stories about the crazies—in generational terms, the sons of the yippies—one of the groups that have been roaming around New York holding demonstrations and breaking up liberal meetings.

In late March, the crazies decided to hold a demonstration against *The New York Times,* an event that was recorded only marginally in the pages of that august journal. In other milieux, where the actions of the crazies are "hometown" news, they received wider coverage. The following account is by Steve Lerner in *The Village Voice,* March 27, 1969. The second "clip," an action by the crazies against a pacifist peace forum, is by Joe Flaherty, *The Village Voice,* April 3, 1969—*Editors.*

The United States is probably the only place in the world where demonstrations have turned into a spectator sport. Sailors, prostitutes, newsmen, printers in four-cornered newspaper hats, passing motorists, theatregoers, local bartenders, and the whole gang took time off to come out and watch the Crazies do their bit [a demonstration against The New York Times*]. . . .*

"What's in the bag, kid?" a detective asked a long-haired boy who was carrying a sign which read "The Saturday Load and the

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Sunday Bullshit." The boy handed the officer the bag. Opening it he found to his eternal disappointment and minimal embarrassment that it was not a concealed weapon of infernal destruction but only a bologna sandwich.

"Move along, miss," a young cop suggested politely to a beautiful blond girl who was standing on his corner watching the picket line. "I can't," she said, batting her eyelashes at him shyly. "I'm with them," she continued, gesturing toward the demonstrators.

Suddenly there was the very strong smell of puke at the Broadway end of 43rd Street. Apparently one of the stink bombs which the demonstrators had brought with them went off by mistake within their own ranks. It was not the only weapon which ran afoul that evening. Several plastic bags of yellow paint, intended for the windows of the trucks which were taking away the Sunday issue of the Times, *fell on the ground and splattered several hapless demonstrators who stepped on them.*

A pregnant woman who had been holding a toilet-paper-roll version of The New York Times *was snatched out of the picket line and hustled away by detectives for no apparent reason. Attorneys who tried to accompany her were turned back. For a moment it looked as if something might happen. The demonstrators surged forward and the police pushed back, banging their clubs on the barricades in a manner which invoked no less than utter terror.*

"Scotty Reston is a You Know What," one poster teased, "All the News That's Shit to Print," someone else claimed, "The New York Times *Disguises Bald Racism with a Liberal Toupee." . . .*

But no one could really get it up for the Times. *Everyone had their own little bitch, everyone read it with their own kind of skepticism, but the point was that the picketers knew in the back of their minds that after the demonstration was over they were going to slink off to their local newsstand and buy a copy of none other than the Sunday edition of the* Times*—the very one they hadn't been able to stop from coming out. They would buy it Sunday and buy it again on Monday to see if their little display of annoyance had hit the Big* Times. . . .

—The Village Voice, *March 27, 1969*

An East Village story: II

With the sounds of the falling cherry orchard echoing in their ears, the enemies of the people's republic sat in St. Mark's Church in the Bouwerie last Saturday discussing the sentimental revisionist issue of peace. . . .

For the benefit of those without a scorecard, the Crazies are the new purists of the left. Their aim is to purge the old guard who are still sick enough to believe in electoral politics, pacifism, and peaceful demonstrations. One might assume the movement was started in Transylvania, since the catchword of the group is blood—or to be more precise, liberal blood. Come the revolution, according to various spokesmen for the group, the present left will be the first to go. Or as one young man stated: "Che wanted to come to the United States to kill the liberals." One can't recall such purity of spirit since St. Theresa was transformed into the "Little Flower."

The arrival of the Crazies at the meeting was not unexpected.

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Early that morning, [David] *McReynolds* [of the War Resisters League] *had received a call from the underground UPI, informing him that the Crazies had called the press to tell them of their battle plans. This, of course, is straight out of the revolutionary handbook, since everyone knows Fidel and Che held a press conference up in the Sierra Maestra announcing they would come down to take over the towns.*

Besides the general purge of the established left, the Crazies wanted to confront [Pete] *Hamill who had called two of their leaders, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, "assholes" in print. . . .*

As Bella Abzug—who last Wednesday led 1400 women on a peace march to Washington to confront members of the House of Representatives—was speaking, the door opened and about 100 Crazies entered and ringed the room. These proponents of the new freedom then proceeded to shout and jeer until Miss Abzug had to relinquish the floor.

McReynolds assumed her place to attempt to restore order. For decades of work in the peace movement, he was rewarded with such epithets as "sell-out" and "red baiter." A young girl standing in the back of the room, who probably was the anarchist in residence at Scarsdale High when McReynolds was serving time for one of his many peace busts, walked up to him and shot water in his face from a plastic pistol. The assassin then retreated to the back of the room and pasted an orange and black sticker stating "Sirhan Lives," on a bulletin board. . . .

As a barroom orator of some note, I decided to take my chances next and spent the first few minutes explaining Pete Hamill's absence, noting that his name had appeared on the speakers' list without his consent. But the "revolutionaries" knew better—Hamill was hiding from their water gun wrath. They wouldn't believe me, since I had "a high-paying writer's job," a view oddly shared by my editor and publisher and hotly contested by my wife and agent. But, obviously, I was reeking of decadence. . . .

Respectfully, I offered the "revolutionaries" the suggestion that, instead of abusing lifelong pacifists and lady peace workers, their time might be better spent confronting members of the PBA or the American Legion or the Longshoremen's Union, but this was summarily rejected—probably because the aforementioned groups might do something "unliberal" like knocking them on their asses.

By now, the meeting was a total disaster. The Crazies, who were as integrated as the Daughters of the American Revolution, accused the panel of racism. In agonized tones, a young "guerrilla" asked the panel and those in the audience who came to listen: "Where were you when I was getting my ass kicked in Chicago?" Chicago has become to the "revolutionaries" what the GPO in Dublin is to the barroom Irish. You just can't find anyone who wasn't there.

So the plastic revolution is on, and the ground rules are simple. The terrain is restricted to Greenwich Village, East and West. The enemy preferably should be pacifists, ladies from the Women Strike for Peace, and mannerly liberals. The objective: to get a Model Cities grant for concentration camps to house the non-purists. . .

—The Village Voice, *April 3, 1969*

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Who knows New York? —and other notes on a mixed-up city

IRVING KRISTOL & PAUL WEAVER

THOMAS WOLFE once entitled a memorable short story, "Only the Dead Know Brooklyn." Who knows New York? Not very many among the living, it would seem. New York is not different from any other city in that basic statistical data are fragmentary and hard to come by; our cities all have grotesquely inadequate information-gathering services. But surely New York is unique among American cities for the vast ignorance and odd misimpressions which its own inhabitants—including the most educated and the most powerful—have of it. Only in New York can active politicians and leading journalists be so blithely unaware of the kinds of people who live in their city, of where they live and how, of what their condition is and of what their problems are. Everyone knows, for instance, that New York City is in the process of rapidly acquiring a nonwhite majority, and that the city will have to adapt itself—painfully, but inevitably—to this radically new situation. But what everyone knows is, in this case as in so many others, not so. It is extremely unlikely that this nonwhite majority could arrive before 1990; and it is very likely that it will never arrive at all. Together with Los Angeles, New York City remains one of the "whitest" of our large urban centers. In this coming winter's election, the combined Negro-Puerto Rican vote will be in the neighborhood of 15 per cent of the electorate. This modest statistic comes as a great surprise to most people, who have received a dif-

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ferent impression from reading the *Times*, watching TV, etc.[1] These people are equally incredulous when you mention the fact that there are as many Italians in the northeast Bronx ("Little Italy") as there are Negroes in Harlem. Where on earth have they been hiding? To which the answer, of course, is they haven't been hiding at all; they have merely been invisible to the myopic eyes of the mass media.

And here, ironically, we touch upon one of the basic reasons why New York is so difficult a city to comprehend. Not only is it so large and so fantastically heterogeneous—it also happens to be the home of our mass media: of *Time* and *Newsweek*, of *Life* and *Look*, of NBC and CBS, of the New York *Times* (which is more of a national newspaper than a local one), and of the major book publishing houses. All of these institutions help to make New York a great city. They also help to make it an unknown city—for their vision of New York City is obscured by a cloud of general ideas about something called "the urban crisis," which is the subject that *really* interests them. Indeed, it interests them so much that they have little time or energy to spare for the complex, intractable actualities of New York itself. Most of the editors of these magazines, most of the executives of these networks have visited Paris far more often than they have visited Brooklyn and can find their way around St. Germain des Prés though they would be forever lost in Bensonhurst. If you ask any of these gentlemen whether Canarsie truly exists, or whether it is only a legendary place, you have at best a fifty-fifty chance of getting the right answer. Similarly, just about any statistic, no matter how elementary, relating to New York City which is published in these journals or broadcast over these networks has at best a fifty-fifty chance of being roughly accurate.

New York City, then, precisely because it is the media center of the nation, projects a highly distorted image. Those New Yorkers who inform all of us about "our urban crisis" live either in the suburbs or—if they can afford it—in a few, small areas not far from midtown Manhattan (mainly the Upper East Side). They are our cosmopolitan parochials, a vital segment of our Upper East Side and Suburban Elite—U.E.S.S.E., for short—who can drive unerringly to Kennedy Airport but would need a helicopter to arrive safely in Bayside (which, one had better say quickly, is in Queens). Now, Manhattan is unquestionably the heart of New York. But New York City has a body, too—the other four boroughs, where 85 per cent of the people of New York live. This body and these people remain *terra incognita* to our mass media.

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[1] The Negro-Puerto Rican sector constitutes a bit less than 30 per cent of the population. Its rate of growth is now about 3 per cent a year—and this rate has been gradually declining over the past four years. Because of the great number of young children, and the tendency of such largely low-income groups not to vote at all, the nonwhite vote usually constitutes about half of its percentage of the population.

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The imaginary city

More dangerous than ignorance is illusion, and the New York elite that governs our mass media is peculiarly susceptible to this danger. It has certain conventional—and tenacious—notions about "the urban crisis" and automatically applies them to New York City. Nothing illustrates this better than the way in which New York City's Puerto Rican population (11 per cent of the total) is treated.

The basic assumption of the mass media is that Puerto Ricans are Spanish-speaking blacks and can simply be amalgamated into the category of "nonwhites." The assumption is plausible to the extent that many Puerto Ricans do have dark skins; that—like the Negroes—they are predominantly poor people; and that there are many political issues which move poor Puerto Ricans and poor blacks to concerted political action. But, once this has been conceded, it is also true that Puerto Ricans are in many important respects very different from American blacks. They have, not only their own language, but also —and most important—their own nationality. Indeed, New York's Puerto Ricans today resemble nothing so much as the Sicilian immigrants of sixty years ago. They are, at the moment, actually poorer than the city's blacks, but one senses—they sense, especially those of the second generation—that their destiny, as an immigrant group, is rather different from that of the native born blacks, and there exists only a fragile and transient community of interests. It is no accident that half of the Puerto Ricans electorate voted against the civilian police review board—an issue on which the black community was strikingly united. Nor is it irrelevant that, in neighborhood after neighborhood, the poverty program, the school decentralization program, the Model Cities program are all embroiled in a bitter struggle for predominance between blacks and Puerto Ricans. The media are sublimely uninterested in such petty phenomena. They have a larger and longer view, which blandly takes it for granted that Puerto Ricans are part of a "Third World" spectrum, in which the blacks are the center and the keystone. That the emerging political competition—and eventual political conflict—between blacks and Puerto Ricans may be a major factor in New York life is beneath their notice.

It goes without saying that the problem of incorporating the American Negro into the mainstream of American life is the very core and substance of our urban crisis. But it is wildly misleading to look at our cities and to see *nothing but* this. There are other minorities, with their own kinds of problems, their own ambitions, their own passions. And then there is the majority of whites—of Jews and Italians and Irish and Poles and Germans and WASPs—who never get on television and whose existence is only discovered in election

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years, when it is suddenly realized that many of them too are poor, that even more are struggling to make a living, and that they have votes and strong opinions on subjects which the mass media had always thought to fall within their own sovereign territory. Probably no newspaper in history has ever been—is ever being—so regularly surprised by the attitudes of its local citizenry as the New York *Times*.

The fact seems to be that the mass media have decided beforehand that the scenario of our urban crisis should consist of militant blacks dramatically confronting "the establishment"—perhaps because this makes for such colorful journalistic copy, perhaps because the media really believe, in their simple-minded way, that "history" is made by such dramatic clashes. The consequence is that, if you are a black militant, you can call for a mass demonstration in front of City Hall and promptly be given three minutes of TV news time to explain why. If no one shows up, you are given another three minutes to explain that, too. If you are a nonmilitant black, you don't exist. Similarly, any ambitious white can be assured of national exposure if he sends out a press release announcing that he has just formed a racist, vigilante organization. That hits the right note of apocalypse, to which our mass media instinctively respond.

Apocalypse is the theme—and not only in race relations. If you make a speech saying that New York's air is the most polluted of any city in the world, and that we are suffocating ourselves to death, you are respectfully listened to. If, in contrast, you explain that the concept of "pollution" is complex and ambiguous, and that in important respects New York's air is healthier today than it was fifteen years ago (which is quite true), the media are incredulous and indifferent. In the same way, if you say that New York City is being choked to death by its traffic, you are being responsible and constructive, whereas if you point out that New York's traffic flow is much superior to that of London, Paris, or Tokyo you are merely acting the gadfly.

Both ends against the middle?

A great many people in New York are now convinced—as a result of the school decentralization imbroglio and other events—that an unholy alliance exists between the city's Upper East Side and Suburban Elite (the media men, WASP bankers and foundation officials, affluent Jewish financiers and professionals, advertising executives, etc.) on the one hand, and the ghetto militants on the other. The purpose of this alliance, they insist, is to secure the interests of the U.E.S.S.E. by offering to the militants the jobs, the schools, the neighborhoods, and all the various civic amenities now in the possession of the working and lower middle classes.

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The strange thing about this conspiracy theory is that it is both false and true at the same time. It is false in that there is no such conspiracy. It is true in that things proceed just as if there were. The explanation of this seeming paradox is that the Elite does see its main function—its historic mission, even—to be the appeasement of the militants, in order to achieve civic stability and peace. At the same time, it tends to be bored by and indifferent to the white working and middle class, whose members in any case lead such uninteresting and drearily conformist lives. It has nothing *against* the people of this class, mind you. It just wishes they would get out of the way, so that it can get on with the business of coping with "the urban crisis."

It is impossible to overemphasize the good conscience that this U.E.S.S.E. so smugly possesses. They are truly shocked and indignant when a middle class neighborhood rises in protest against the location of a "vest pocket" low cost housing project, with mainly welfare tenants, in its midst. They are utterly confounded when *black* middle class neighborhoods react in the same way. And when you point out to them that they could, after all, locate these projects off Park Avenue, they think you are being frivolous—which is true, but which isn't the point.

Nothing could better exemplify the orientation of this Elite than its contrasting attitudes to two great cultural institutions of the city: Lincoln Center and the city colleges.

Lincoln Center is the apple of its eye—it works for it, pays for it, propagandizes for it with a commendable fervor. The U.E.S.S.E. is immensely proud of Lincoln Center and has every right to be. It is a credit to the city and a worthy monument to the civic energies that inspired it. True, it is used by only a tiny minority of the city's population, and the Elite itself is the nucleus of this minority. But this is always the case with such institutions as opera, theater, ballet, etc.—and no city can be great without paying special attention to such elevated minority tastes. New York needed Lincoln Center, and one can only be pleased that it got it.

But now turn to the city colleges. These are, for various historical reasons, unique institutions—in no other city of this country are the "local" undergraduate colleges also first rate places of learning, which send a truly startling proportion of their students on to graduate school. They are free; they are integrated; they are nationally famous. One would have thought that it would unquestionably be in the public interest to sustain and cherish them. But, no: they are inexorably and placidly being transformed—degraded is not too strong a term—with the approval and consent of the Elite, into four year community colleges, with all academic distinction being remorselessly extinguished.

Why? To help solve "the urban crisis," one is told. What this means

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is that black militants are demanding that many more (and, eventually, all) black students who are graduated from high school be admitted automatically to the city colleges, regardless of grades, or aptitudes, or whatever—and the U.E.S.S.E., which in any case sends its youngsters out of town, thinks it is being "constructive" when it meets this demand at least part way—i.e., when it grants to poor black youngsters a college diploma in lieu of a college education. If it is pointed out to Elite spokesmen that there exist, in addition to a SEEK program of remedial instruction for potential college-goers, two year community colleges for those who can't qualify for the city colleges, one is told in a patronizing way that access to such "educational ghettos" does not represent the kind of "equality" that the spirit of the times requires. And when one makes the rejoinder that the clear majority of the students in the community colleges are white—that, indeed, every single one of the six community colleges has a white majority—the response is a dismissive shrug, as if such details were beneath the dignity of anyone concerned with "the urban crisis."

Well, an awful lot of New Yorkers think such "details" are terribly important—at least as important as wild rhetoric by black militants about "educational genocide," to which the authorities listen so respectfully. The majority of high school graduates in this city are still overwhelmingly white, and they (and their parents) have a great stake in the city colleges. These are people, the sons and daughters of the postman, the taxi driver, the elevator operator, the shipping clerk, etc., for whom even the state college system—with its tuition and boarding fees, since there is no branch in the city itself—is too expensive. They *need* the city colleges; and so, for that matter, do the growing number of Negroes and Puerto Ricans who are upwardly mobile, and who want a college degree that is more than a scrap of paper, that testifies to something more than the fact that there is an urban crisis. The city colleges are one of the most valuable—perhaps *the* most valuable—patrimonies of New York. The Jews took them over from the WASPs and used them to great advantage; the Irish and the Italians are now participating and benefitting; the Negroes and Puerto Ricans will very soon be in a position to inherit this remarkable system of higher education. But as things are going now, their inheritance will be worthless.

So it does look very much like a conspiracy—even if it's merely a case of the Elite, in its infinite wisdom, (a) having decided that a black New York is "the wave of the future"; (b) having made the further assumption that, since the black militants use such earthy language, they must have grass roots support; and (c) being intensely irritated that there are still so many faceless, middle income whites around to interfere with their careful management of these self-fulfilling prophecies and self-validating assumptions.

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Freezing the checkerboard

New York may never have been a melting pot, but it always has been a jumbled, *ad hoc* stew of ethnic and racial groups which mingle, at work and play, to an extent that is without precedent in American cities. One has only to walk down Broadway during lunch hour, or visit Coney Island on a hot summer day, to see that. True, there is only a modest degree of residential integration of the races —but it is still noticeably more than is to be found in any other American city. The Negroes of New York mainly live in ghettos (some of which, however, contain substantial middle class neighborhoods), but as compared with any other city, there are more ghettos, and these are more widely dispersed.[2] Similarly, the Negroes suffer from limited opportunities—but they do constitute close to one-third of the municipal civil service. Many Negroes may feel powerless politically, but it is nonetheless true that just about every elected and appointed official whose duties impinge primarily upon the Negro community is a Negro. In sum, Negroes of New York seemed, until recently, well on their way toward following the traditional immigrant route to a secure and honorable position in American society. Not necessarily toward "integration," whatever that can mean in a city like New York where ethnic identity is still so important. But certainly toward—well, let's say "incorporation."

For the moment at least, this journey has been rudely interrupted. The reason is an upsurge of black nationalism of such intensity as to be obsessive in character, and immensely self-destructive in effect. That's putting it more bluntly than is usually done; but discussion of this whole phenomenon has suffered from a deficiency of candor.

The extraordinary character of this black nationalism reveals itself in the fantasies about whites that are now rampant in the ghetto, especially—alas!—among the high school and college students. To begin with, there is the fantasy of white affluence. Though New York's blacks have every opportunity to observe the existence of a white working class, who have to struggle to keep their heads above water, it is now becoming part of ghetto folklore that all whites are rich and privileged and exploiters of the Negro population. It is almost impossible to persuade many young blacks that they ought to attend night school, since they cannot believe—even as they see it —that this is where white youngsters go. Similarly, any black demagogue these days can dismiss the prospects of becoming a television repairman or taxi driver or garage mechanic or truck driver as just the kind of "dead end" vocations that whites are trying to foist on blacks—and he will be solemnly listened to. In addition, there is the

[2] Professor Nathan Kantrowitz, of Fordham, has found that the degree of "segregation" between upper-income Negroes in New York and lower-income Negroes is about the same as between upper-income whites and lower-income whites.

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growing conviction that white society is preparing for nothing less than mass genocide against the blacks, and that therefore the most violently aggressive action is simply a form of self-defense. The number of intelligent and educated young blacks who believe this is absolutely flabbergasting.

It is a common parlor game, these days, to speculate about the psychological roots of this phenomenon. The speculations are, on the whole, silly—the "black mind" is not significantly different from, or more complicated than, or more interesting than the "white mind," Le Roi Jones or Norman Mailer to the contrary notwithstanding. One suspects that what is at work here is nothing more than a perfectly natural sense of outrage at historical misfortune and present injustice, mixed with a similarly natural desire for some kind of revenge. Besides, in a decade when practically all groups—French Canadians, Scotsmen, Flamands, Bretons, etc.—have been experiencing a nationalist seizure, it is not so strange that something of the sort should have happened to American Negroes, and with a special intensity.

In any case, the upshot is that black militant leaders have managed to persuade an awful lot of blacks—not a majority, one is quite certain, but that doesn't really matter, since the majority is passive—that their single hope lies in an overt assault against a malevolent white community. The only possible consequence can be disaster for the blacks.

This disaster will almost surely *not*, as some think, take the form of savage repression, to say nothing of genocide. Rather, it is far more likely to take the form of the whites—*both* liberal and not—coming to terms with the militants, the terms being the permanent ghettoization of the Negro masses. For what New York's black militants really want, what they are competing with one another for, is not the overthrow of the white "establishment" but sovereignty over the black populace. And this the whites are, in the end, likely to be only too willing to grant them.

This is what lies behind the whole "decentralization" issue in New York, and that is why the related topic of "community control" is so crucial. The question of depriving white ethnic groups of their present positions—as teachers, sanitationmen, policemen, firemen, construction workers, etc.—for the presumed benefit of blacks is inflammatory, as it is intended to be. But that is not the ultimate meaning of this controversy. (The blacks are already moving into these jobs in a massive way, and in some cases now are "represented" beyond their proportion of the population.) What is ultimate is—well, to see that, let us assume that "community control" has been effected, and then let us imagine what New York City is like. There will be black communities having control over their own services, over all the jobs in the area, over their own local budget, over housing, etc. Next to them, there will be white communities with comparable

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powers. And now let us ask: *how does a man move from one to the other?* The answer is short and easy: he won't be able to. And this, precisely, is what the militant black nationalists are after.

New York's ethnic geography is in a constant state of flux. Ghettos and neighborhoods expand and contract, as individuals of one kind or another move in and out. Bedford-Stuyvesant, which will fairly soon have the largest concentration of blacks in the city, is a relatively new ghetto. The older ghetto of Harlem is slowly losing population, and thirty years from now may even be a fairly posh white neighborhood (as it once was). The perpetual movement of people and ethnic and racial groups is the hope of New York—but it is the bane of the purely ethnic politician and the despair of the purely nationalist one. A shifting power base makes power hungry men anxious and insecure. And it is for this reason that the black nationalists have, with great political acumen, raised the matter of "community control." They want to *freeze* the neighborhoods of New York. They want to prevent middle class or working class blacks from moving to the white areas, elsewhere in the city or in the suburbs. Their aim is *apartheid,* because only in *apartheid* can they ensure their rule. Nor do they care about the economic and social consequences. The poorer, the more ignorant, the more isolated the black communities are, the better the chances for black nationalist leaders to play upon their grievances and to stimulate their fantasies.

A great many whites can short-sightedly take pleasure in this prospect—it is, after all, only a more sophisticated form of "keeping them in their place." And it is obviously possible that a deal will be made, which turns over the blacks to nationalist domination, in return for a relaxation of white anxieties over black threats to neighborhood and peace of mind. Should this happen, New York may well become a more peaceful and less agitated city. But what civilized American would want to live there?

Schools

Of all the problems with which New York City is beset, one of the most exasperating is that of the public schools. It is exasperating because so many of the people who have the most to say about public education—the teachers union, Negro militants, intellectuals, the U.E.S.S.E., and the media—are in the thrall of a number of rather serious misconceptions. (Sometimes, of course, they are simply being disingenuous). Take, for example, the whole question of "how good" the schools are, and whether they are getting better or worse. Every so often, a new study is published showing that the median reading level of New York's school pupils is slowly falling farther and farther below the national average. With each such revelation, the media and the educationists send up a fresh chorus of alarums. The

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schools, they say, are "failing" the children of New York, and we need either community control or decentralization or more remedial services or better-paid teachers or smaller classes or whatever to meet this crisis.

Well, what such statistics imply isn't all that clear. While it is true that median performance levels are falling, it is also true that the proportion of Negro and Puerto Rican children in the public schools has been rising.[3] Now for many reasons—social class, cultural background, poverty, transiency, discrimination—Negro and Puerto Rican children simply do not perform as well as in school as white children. So as the population of New York's public schools grows less representative of the nation's school children as a whole, one would naturally expect the median reading scores of New York school children to diverge from the national average. When test scores confirm this expectation, it is wildly misleading to proclaim a "crisis," and to infer that the schools are getting worse. Indeed, once you "correct" the statistics to take account of the composition of the school population, you discover that New York's schools perform somewhat better than those of other large cities. This is hardly surprising. New York, after all, does spend up to $200 more per pupil per year than any other big city, and it has a lower student-teacher ratio. One can debate the relative costs and benefits of such expenditures; the point is that there is no solid evidence for believing that the public schools of New York are "failing" in the sense of not accomplishing what schools in this country generally do accomplish as a matter of course.

But even if it is agreed that the schools are "not guilty" of creating those declining reading averages, shouldn't they nevertheless be held responsible for doing something to remedy this situation? Shouldn't they be made better in order to compensate for the increasingly disadvantaged background of the school population? Oddly enough, the answers to these questions are not as self-evident as one might think.

We all want better schools. We all want the best possible schools. There is plenty of room for improvement in the structure and functioning of New York City's schools. It does not follow, however, that better schools—whatever we mean by that term—will significantly affect the educational achievements of ghetto children. It is one thing to have great faith, as Americans properly do, in the power of education. It is quite another thing to have such faith in the power of schools to educate. The overwhelming weight of scholarly evidence—the Coleman Report, the Brookings Institution study of *Education and Poverty*, etc.—is that the capacity of schools to

[3] One-quarter of the pupils of New York go to private (mainly parochial) schools. They are overwhelmingly white, of course. Statistics about how *the* schools are doing never include private school populations.

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change the basic attitudes and habits of students is exceedingly slight, and that the poor academic performance of ghetto children stems mainly from just such attitudes and habits. These same conclusions must be drawn from the many experiments with different kinds of "compensatory" and "remedial" education that have been tried in New York and elsewhere. From Headstart through Higher Horizons and More Effective Schools, the experience has been very much the same: little or no improvement among the "experimental" students, accompanied by the classic pattern of progressive academic retardation.

This scholarly evidence is by no means entirely negative. It reveals that the massive influence of socioeconomic status cannot be overcome by the relatively puny efforts of the schools. But this, in turn, suggests that even a small improvement in socioeconomic status will almost certainly improve academic performance. So, if we are interested in education, we might be wise to pay less attention to schools *per se* and a lot more to the problem of poverty. One sometimes gets the uneasy impression that an important reason there is so much ado about schools is that this is cheaper and politically easier than really doing something about poverty.

"Decentralization"

Every so often—perhaps as frequently as every decade or two—political opinion in America undergoes a sweeping tidal change. With no discernible struggle or discussion, the entire country suddenly takes its political bearings anew; the old issues and modes of perception quietly vanish, to be superseded almost instantly by new terms of reference and new political questions. Such a change took place during the first administration of FDR, when the presuppositions of the welfare state effortlessly supplanted those of *laissez-faire*. Similarly, America may well have experienced a comparable upheaval in the past few years. The common faith in centralized bureaucracy as an instrument of social change—a belief that has guided the rulers of America since the 1930's—has fallen into discredit and has been displaced by a popular pressure for "decentralization" and "community control," which by now seems practically irresistible.

Nowhere is this development farther advanced than in New York City, where decentralization clearly seems to be an Idea Whose Time has Come. Political structures designed to encourage participation by neighborhood residents and to ascertain their will can now be found throughout the public sector—in the poverty program, urban renewal, model cities, the Lindsay political organization, and, most recently, in the school system. Indeed, it has come to the point where one candidate for the mayoralty built his entire campaign

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around decentralization and the neo-Leninesque slogan, "All power to the neighborhoods!" One might have thought that last fall's bitter conflict in Ocean Hill would have made such an appeal to the voters unthinkable. In fact, it has done no such thing.

For in a city like New York, decentralization possesses an immensely appealing plausibility. To the Negro and Puerto Rican minorities, it promises self-respect, "self-determination," and the opportunity for reform and self-improvement. To those of liberal sentiment, decentralization is attractive in no small part because it is what the blacks are asking for; but they also believe that the current political structure of the city is so resistant to what they think are vital reforms that only by dismantling this structure and reconstituting sovereignty at the community level can New York be saved. And it is not only the "progressive" elements who are drawn to certain aspects of decentralization. Lower- and middle-income whites in or near the gray areas, who live in fear and resentment of Negroes and the ghetto, would like nothing better than to have the power to keep Negroes out and to maintain "their" neighborhoods. Thus, the great diversity of New York's population and the inevitable tensions among its groups lend decentralization an almost universal appeal: to each group and neighborhood it promises power, status, territorial integrity, and an immunity from threatening others. This new orthodoxy of reform is riding a wave of something very much like insularity, as is evidenced (in a slightly different context) by Norman Mailer's successful revival during his recent primary campaign of the old complaint that New York City pays more in state taxes than it gets in return.[4]

How to divide power, and whom to allocate it to, is the most basic sort of political decision a nation makes. It is also an endlessly complicated decision. Different kinds and sizes of groups, after all, have different things uniquely in common. A large group will tend to act differently from a small one; a dispersed population will use authority differently from a concentrated population; a heterogeneous community will tend to behave differently from a homogeneous one; and an ethnically defined group will see matters differently from an

[4] It is impossible to assess for certain the truth of Mailer's claim as regards transactions between New York City and New York State. The state doesn't keep its books in a form that permits one to disaggregate and price the various state services by territory. The probability is that the city *does* pay somewhat more than it receives. But is this so unreasonable? Many state services and grants are intended to have a redistributive effect, taking money from the rich (e.g., Manhattan, the richest tax source in the state) and giving to the poor (e.g., the depressed Southern Tier counties). Nor does the city's obligation to the rest of the state rest on purely legal or altruistic grounds. Many upstate counties are sharply limited in their potential for industrial development because much of their land is preempted by the New York City water system. Given these circumstances, the idea that there should be a perfect equality between what the city pays in taxes and what it receives in State disbursements is both foolish and unjust. It is, nevertheless, a very popular idea—in New York City.

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economically defined group. The determination of the appropriate units of government—whether regional, metropolitan, city, or neighborhood—thus rests on the ultimately political choice among the values and interests one wishes government to serve.

In the abstract, decentralization and community control have much to recommend them. For one thing, most public services (including education) are probably somewhat cheaper when provided by relatively small (50,000-100,000 people) units of government. In the second place, decentralization, whether accompanied by community control or not, tends to increase the acceptability of public services by making it easier to adapt them to special local circumstances. But most important of all, small governmental units which possess any significant autonomy are ideally suited to promoting good citizenship and enhancing its personal satisfactions. The great problem in any mass, industrial, egalitarian democracy is that the individual is easily isolated and can feel himself to have no relation to public institutions. In small governmental units men can best see an intimate connection between their private interests and the public interest; and through the political activity which that perception prompts, they can become habituated to proper modes of political conduct. Stability and effectiveness are thereby promoted, and the individual comes to enjoy a just self-regard and the other satisfactions of decent citizenship.

Yet on closer inspection, the benefits of decentralization and community control, in a city like New York, turn out to be very limited indeed. There may be something, even a great deal, to be said for decentralization elsewhere. There is little to be said for it in New York. For the inescapable fact is that New York City is not a congeries of quiet, self-sufficient, isolated little neighborhoods. People live in one part of the city, work in another, shop in yet another, and entertain themselves still elsewhere. Where people live is itself highly differentiated along a complicated grid of class, ethnic, and racial lines. This interdependence of people and areas is what makes a metropolis, as against a mere city. It is what makes New York so exciting, so creative amidst its disorder. Do we really want to exchange this world city for a collection of neighborhoods?

It should also be observed that it is unlikely that the kind of community control envisaged by many of its advocates would ever be permitted to exist. For while it is entirely feasible to establish community governments, it will be totally impossible to abolish the existing city and state governments. As long as these larger institutions exist and retain some powers—and, of course, they will retain the preeminent power of government, that of taxation and allocation of resources—they will constitute a permanent check on the freedom of the community. And what sort of check will it be? It will be the restraint of the city-wide majority—which, in New

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York, will for a long time remain a white, middle- and lower-income majority. No more perfect script for perpetual civil conflict can be imagined. These people may be willing to give the ghetto control over its own housing, in a spirit of apartheid. But, despite any original promises, will they be so obliging about education? Anyone who really thinks that this majority will cheerfully pay taxes so that black nationalism (with its inevitable racist overtones) can be taught in ghetto schools is being unworldly, to put it mildly.

In the last analysis, then, what is really interesting about decentralization in New York is not the reform itself, but rather that its liberal publicists and supporters embraced it without giving it even as much thought as the average graduate student does to the choice of a wife. Any liberal who became wedded to decentralization had of necessity to undergo a radical upheaval in his political goals and priorities; and yet many went through this transformation with wide-eyed serenity and at mercurial speed. This points to a more basic phenomenon—and problem: the current condition of liberal opinion in New York City.

The intellectuals of New York

One vociferous segment of such liberal opinion is constituted by the intellectuals of New York.

New York intellectuals are famous the world over—but they have never been known for their familiarity with New York City. On the contrary: one of the editors of *Partisan Review* was famous precisely for his sheer physical inability to move his body out of Greenwich Village—he even had to be escorted to the pier, so he could be put aboard a ship for Paris. He was generally thought to possess an especially fine sensibility.

That was back in the 1930's, and 1940's, when the intellectuals of New York formed something like an *intelligentsia*—the first (and last) in American history. It was a self-conscious community, set apart from the nation by its aesthetic tastes, and set against the nation by its ideological perspective. It was thoroughly cosmopolitan, mildly bohemian, self-consciously "highbrow," and intensely censorious. Most of its members were descendants of Jewish socialist immigrants from Poland or Russia, and their attitude toward the American natives was not so very different from their parents' attitude toward the peasants and *muzhiks* of the old country. These were "The People" who would, by history's cunning, and under "enlightened" leadership, overthrow the established order and build a new and better one. Meanwhile, one didn't mix with them socially.

This New York intellectual community of yesteryear, then, lived in a self-contained hothouse. It was an atmosphere in which ideas were experienced with an unmatched intensity; in which art was

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revered; and in which many critical and creative talents could—and did—bloom, as was possible nowhere else. It was also an atmosphere uncongenial to any serious study of American realities, to say nothing of merely urban ones. Such study was regarded as an improper mode of forming general opinions about capitalism, socialism, or any such interesting topic; among other things, it partook of the grave heresies of "academicism," "eclecticism," "pragmatism," and "philistinism." Survivors of this period, when they get together today, speak of it as the best of times and the worst of times. That is probably a balanced judgment.

All that was long ago, and in a different world. Today, New York City may still be the *cultural* capital of the nation—though even this statement could be challenged. It is no longer, however, any kind of *intellectual* capital. The tremendous expansion of higher education, after World War II, quickly made the university the natural focus of American intellectual life, even of avant-garde culture. In the old days, you sat in a cheap flat on Eighth Street and wrote an experimental play which you circulated in manuscript among a few friends; now you can sit on a shaded campus, in well paid comfort, and actually watch your play being produced by enthusiastic students! Meanwhile, Greenwich Village has become a tourist trap for those who want the instant spectacle of real live junkies, lesbians, transvestites, etc.

Those who are today designated as "New York intellectuals" are, for the most part, not New Yorkers, or not intellectuals, or not really either. During this past decade only one authentic "New York intellectual," Susan Sontag, was born to this city. The *New York Review of Books*, for instance, draws most of its contributors from outside New York—a majority, in fact, are British. Its editorial circle is no intellectual clique but is an odd amalgam of journalists, cultural entrepreneurs, and a healthy slice of cafe society. Its central figure is not a Koestler or an Orwell but—George Plimpton, who helped found the *Paris Review*, now writes engagingly about professional sports, and gives the most wonderful parties (if the society page of the New York *Times* is to be believed) where those in the culture business mix familiarly with other members of the U.E.S.S.E. Similarly, the *Evergreen Review* is another influential New York publication—but one cannot immediately attach the name of a single "New York intellectual" to it.

Yet these same New York intellectuals, bereft of all liberal instinct, are generally thought to be an organic part of what is called "liberalism" in this city. Which leads one to wonder: what on earth is an urban liberal these days?

Every now and then, it happens that these "New York intellectuals" do turn their attention to a specific New York problem. One then gets precious little in the way of enlightenment from them.

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Their general purpose, in such cases, is to wreak as much mischief as possible so that American society will bore them a little less. This was what happened during the turmoil over "community control" of the schools, when several dozen of New York's cultural figures, all of whose children go to expensive private schools, suddenly decided that Jewish, middle-class, public school teachers were corrupting the souls of young black folk, and that what was needed was an infusion of Black Pantherism into the classroom.

So, in place of the old *intelligentsia*, with its stern conceptions of "highbrow," "lowbrow," "middlebrow," we have a cultural claque that is very much in the mainstream of American youth culture, underground culture, drug culture, etc. Its ideology is a compound of pornopolitics and pseudo-Marxism. The only good reason for propounding this ideology in New York—rather than in, say, the more agreeable climate of Berkeley—is that New York is still the place to get "exposure," if that's what you want. (Norman Mailer could run for mayor in New York, not because he has so many admiring readers in this city, but because there are so many idle television cameras in this city.) And with such exposure, there goes some more material benefits: one is told that the greatest single purchaser of underground films is Madison Avenue's advertising agencies, which study the camerawork to see if the techniques can be transported to TV commercials.

The liberal coalition comes unglued

Those people who actually consider themselves to be liberals have never been, in the nation as a whole, more than a tiny fraction of the rather odd coalition that made up the Democratic Party. They were, for the most part, upper-income WASPs, and Jews, had gone to the better universities, were professionals of one sort or another, and lived in the great metropolises of the northeast or California. Through their persistence, expertise, and articulateness, these liberals manged to control the Presidential wing of the Democratic Party, from which position they exercised an ever-expanding moral hegemony over most of the nation's public institutions. By the early 1960's, things had come to the point where a man of even modest aspirations in government, law, medicine, business, communications, or the academy found it difficult *not* to be a liberal.

But where they ruled, the liberals usually owed their success to a vast log-rolling strategy, through which they created a majority coalition by giving to each of many groups something it needed or wanted. To the working class, they gave unions; to farmers, a vast array of services and subsidies; to the middle class, education, home loans, and highways; to Negroes, civil rights; to consumers, protection against fraud; and to everyone a certain measure of added pros-

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perity. Nearly all these benefits cost money, of course, and some had a redistributive effect. Yet very few of the liberal programs entailed a clear and direct conflict between the interests of any two groups in the larger coalition. It was especially easy to maintain harmony in cities like New York, where such issues as "bossism" could be dragged out of cold storage every four years and flailed in a stirringly virtuous—and unifying—way. After decades of success with this strategy, liberals must often have felt that they represented majority opinion; *yet the fact remained that they only served the needs of enough people to add up to a majority—which is a very different thing indeed.* Liberals may have ruled, but the doctrine of liberalism never enjoyed a popular mandate in its own right. Just beneath the surface of public discussion, there remained big differences of opinion between liberals and the bulk of their supporters, whose nonliberal views found persistent representation in Congress, the state legislatures, and the city councils.

Through the 1960's, these differences came more and more into the open, and the liberal coalition began to pull itself apart. One factor in this development was the Vietnam war, but far more important and troubling was the issue of the Negro American. As a purely symbolic question—how one should speak of segregation, riots, rising crime rates, and black nationalism—it was divisive enough. But as an issue that would define the purpose of government programs, it was nothing short of explosive. Few things are more important to the typical American than the character of his immediate human and physical environment, and nothing is likely to be more infuriating to him than the intervention of public authority to change that environment in ways he does not like. Middle- and lower-income whites were content to let their liberal leaders speak in favor of integration and equality, so long as speaking was all they did. Serious government action, however, was quite another matter. As liberals enacted programs for racial integration and economic equality during the late 1950's and 1960's, the former supporters of the liberal coalition began to disaffiliate themselves group by group. This process of defection began in the south and has reached the historic point today where no liberal presidential candidate can expect to have the electoral vote of a single southern state. As the focus of liberal action moved north, and embraced state and city government, whites in the lower half of the economic spectrum became increasingly disaffected from the liberal leadership of their Democratic Party.

Far from feeling weakened, however, the liberals were sustained in their self-confidence by growing support from the media and then big business; and they became commensurately less cautious and more doctrinaire in their approach to governing. The alienation of nonliberal white Democrats proceeded apace, providing a growing

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base of opposition to such liberal projects as civilian review boards and growing support for such antiliberal candidates as Ronald Reagan, Louise Day Hicks, Sam Yorty, and many others.

It is altogether probable that this "backlash" could have been contained until it eventually subsided. There was much genuine vexation behind it—but also a bad conscience, because it was implicitly denying American ideals that no one dared expressly question. Liberal leadership might well have ridden out this storm—had not black nationalism, and black violence, erupted. This changed vexation into anger, and a bad conscience into a good one. "Law and order," from having been an Aesopian phrase with a sly anti-Negro implication, became an authentic issue and a cause for authentic concern. There now *was* a crisis in law and order, as one city after another experienced spasms of rioting. And liberalism's response was a convulsion within its own heart and mind.

The end of urban liberalism?

Just a few years ago, liberals across the country could regard New York City as the capital of their political world. Without New York votes and New York money, no liberal president could have been nominated or elected. Without the support of New York Congressmen, many liberal programs would never have been enacted. Even in its municipal politics New York was liberal; calling a mayoralty candidate a "conservative" was a way of denouncing him. No other city spent more money per capita, offered a wider array of public services, or maintained them at a higher level. The tide of liberalism seemed irreversible.

In an astonishingly short time, all this has changed. It is not just that Manhattan is no longer the active center of American liberalism—although that in itself is significant. The main point is that the old liberal coalition is practically extinct as a force to be reckoned with in New York politics. This does not mean, of course, that there are no more liberals in New York City, or that liberal opinion has suddenly vanished; anyone who glances down the roster of New York's Congressional delegation, or peruses the editorial page of the *Times* will be aware of the contrary. What it does mean is that, as active participants in city politics, liberals have become confused and divided; their ideological instincts have become uncertain; and their influence has dissipated as the extremes have grown robust and menacing. New York has seemingly passed beyond liberalism to—well, what New York is coming to is impossible to foretell, but how it is getting there is only too clear.

Throughout much of this century, in every one of their unending causes and in each of their enlightened opinions, liberals had been preoccupied with gross inequalities of economic opportunity or trans-

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gression of constitutional rights which were specific and obvious and could readily be corrected by government. Liberal goals were therefore feasible, and liberal action often had the intended results. Because the beneficiaries of liberal action either lacked indigenous organization and leadership, as was the case with Negroes, or else, like labor unions, were organized around goals which happened, fortuitously, to coincide with liberal goals, liberal sympathies rarely strayed from what liberal principles could justify. But during the 1960's, as the old liberal agenda was enacted, this condition was less frequently true. For even as liberals were encouraging the poor and the black to organize and to achieve a political consciousness, these latter proceeded to do so *on the basis of their common frustration with liberals and liberal remedies.*

It became only too quickly apparent that the old harmony between the liberals' sympathies and their principles no longer existed. Those who continued to follow their humane and sympathetic impulses soon found themselves advocating positions—e.g. black separatism—which contradicted liberal principles at almost every point. Those who stuck resolutely to their principles found that they had to say "no" to the people whom, as liberals, they wished to help and to whom their hearts went out. Indeed, it was worse than that: not only did they have to say "no," but they had to say at least a qualified "no" almost *all the time.* It has been a heart-breaking and mind-muddling experience. Now, any liberal politician is in a situation where he has to choose between the support of organized labor and the support of the black community. And, on traditional liberal principles, such a choice is simply impossible.

What a nonliberal New York might look like is beyond the power of one's political imagination to conceive. Perhaps that is just as well. Sometimes it is better to march backwards into the future. At least, it permits one to concentrate attention and energies on the urgent problems of the moment, and it legitimates improvised solutions. They won't last, of course; but presumably they are better than no solutions at all.

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NEWSREEL

The revolt of the white lower middle class

. . . All over New York City tonight, in places like Inwood, South Brooklyn, Corona, East Flatbush and Bay Ridge, men are standing around saloons talking darkly about their grievances, and even more darkly about possible remedies. Their grievances are real and deep; their remedies could blow this city apart.

* * *

"I'm going out of my mind," an ironworker friend named Eddie Cush told me a few weeks ago. "I average about $8,500 a year, pretty good money. I work my ass off. But I can't make it. I come home at the end of the week, I start paying the bills, I give my wife some money for food. And there's nothing left. Maybe, if I work overtime, I get $15 or $20 to spend on myself. But most of the time, there's nothin'. They take $65 a week out of my pay. I have to come up with $90 a month rent. But every time I turn around, one of the kids needs shoes or a dress or something for school. And then I pick up a paper and read about a million people on welfare in New York or spades rioting in some college or some fat welfare bitch demanding—you know, not askin', demanding—*a credit card at Korvette's . . . I* work *for a living and* I *can't get a credit card at Korvette's. . . . You know, you see that, and you want to go out and strangle someone."*

* * *

In any conversation with working-class whites, you are struck by how the information explosion has hit them. Television has made an enormous impact on them, and because of the nature of that medium —its preference for the politics of theatre, its seeming inability to ever explain what is happening behind the photographed image— much of their understanding of what happens is superficial. Most of them have only a passing acquaintance with blacks, and very few have any black friends. So they see blacks in terms of militants with Afros and shades, or crushed people on welfare. Television never bothers reporting about the black man who gets up in the morning, eats a fast breakfast, says goodbye to his wife and children, and rushes out to work. That is not news. So the people who live in working-class white ghettoes seldom meet blacks who are not threatening to burn down America or asking for help or receiving welfare or committing crime. And in the past five or six years, with urban rioting on everyone's minds, they have provided themselves (or been provided with) a confused, threatening stereotype of blacks

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From Pete Hamill, "The Revolt of the White Lower Middle Class," *New York Magazine,* April 14, 1969, Copyright ©1969 by *New York Magazine.*

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that has made it almost impossible to suggest any sort of black-white working-class coalition.

"Why the hell should I work with spades," he says, "when they are threatening to burn down my house?"

The Puerto Ricans, by the way, seem well on the way to assimilation with the larger community. It has been a long time since anyone has written about "the Puerto Rican problem" (though Puerto Rican poverty remains worse than black poverty), and in white working-class areas you don't hear many people muttering about "spics" anymore.

"At least the Puerto Ricans are working," a carpenter named Jimmy Dolan told me one night, in a place called the Green Oak in Bay Ridge. "They open a grocery store, they work from six in the mornin' till midnight. The P.R.'s are willin' to work for their money. The colored guys just don't wanna work. They want the big Buicks and the fancy suits, but they jus' don't wanna do the work they have ta do ta pay for them."

The working-class white man sees injustice and politicking everywhere in this town now, with himself in the role of victim. He does not like John Lindsay, because he feels Lindsay is only concerned about the needs of blacks; he sees Lindsay walking the streets of the ghettos or opening a privately-financed housing project in East Harlem or delivering lectures about intolerance and brotherhood, and he wonders what it all means to him. *Usually, the working-class white man is a veteran; he remembers coming back from the Korean War to discover that the GI Bill only gave him $110 a month out of which he had to pay his own tuition; so he did not go to college because he could not afford it. Then he reads about protesting blacks in the SEEK program at Queens College, learns that they are being paid up to $200 a month to go to school, with tuition free, and he starts going a little wild.*

* * *

The working-class white man does not care if a black man gets a job in his union, as long as it does not mean the loss of his own job, or the small privileges and sense of self-respect that go with it. I mean it; I know these people, and know that they largely would not care what happens in the city, if what happens at least has the virtue of fairness. For now, they see a terrible unfairness in their lives, and an increasing lack of personal control over what happens to them. And the result is growing talk of revolt.

The revolt involves the use of guns. In East Flatbush, and Corona, and all those other places where the white working class lives, people are forming gun clubs and self-defense leagues and talking about what they will do if real race rioting breaks out. It is a tragic situation, because the poor blacks and the working-class whites should be natural allies. Instead, the black man has become the symbol of the working-class white man's resentments.

"I never had a gun in my life before," a 34-year-old Queens bartender named James Giuliano told me a couple of weeks ago. "But I got me a shotgun, license and all. I hate to have the thing in the house, because of the kids. But the way things are goin', I might have to use it on someone. I really might. It's comin' to that. Believe me, it's comin' to that." . . . Any politician who leaves that white

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man out of the political equation, does so at very large risk. The next round of race riots might not be between people and property, but between people and people. And that could be the end of us.
—New York Magazine, *April 14, 1969*

An intimate evening among intellectuals

When members of the Living Theatre liberated the Theatre for Ideas symposium on "Theatre or Therapy" last Friday night at the Friends Meeting Hall, they showed that action beats talk in life as in art. It was disruption pure and simple, although Steven Ben Israel, principal disrupter, called it at one point "a high seminar in brain damage repair." Julian Beck and Judith Malina, the heads of the radical theatre just back in New York, sat calmly on the dais, along with fellow panelists Robert Brustein, Paul Goodman, and moderator Nat Hentoff, as members of their troupe romped, cavorted, and otherwise mocked the intellectual elite who had gathered for one of their exercises in civilized discourse.

Israel joined the issue within minutes of Brustein's opening remarks. Brustein was reading from notes, reasoning carefully and amiably, reiterating his well-known preference for high art. When he said that "art should be done by supremely gifted individuals," Israel yelled from halfway back in the hall, "We're all supremely gifted individuals." Brustein: "I dispute that." Israel: "Up against the wall."

The exchange made the rest of Brustein's remarks seem fossilized, and the hall seemed to be nodding. "Open the prisons" cut through the tedium, and several arguments got going over this outrage. The uproar provoked Stella Adler to scream for quiet at the top of her well-trained and authoritative voice, and she got it.

Brustein finished his essay in academic traditions and Nat Hentoff, the moderator, passed the mike to Paul Goodman, who took us on a long, folksy ramble about the kind of religious crisis the world is in and the kind it is not in. (Catacomb Christian versus Protestant Reformation.) He enjoined those who are making the former to recognize that the latter is what's happening and "to get on the ball." Rumbles indicated that some members of the Living Theatre, to the extent that they had followed Goodman, felt attacked.

Judith Malina followed Goodman with some rather stentorian remarks about her faith that people will not choose fascism if they are given freedom. "We give the stage to the audience in trust that they will make something sublime, even though, of course, five times out of six, they will make terrible choices. We risk the abuse of freedom in order to allow freedom, and gain greatly." At that point, Israel came forward to parade up and down in front of the dais, made his remark about brain damage repair, and told everybody to go home. Several members of the Living Theatre joined him, including Jenny Hecht, who climbed down, nearly falling, from the balcony, and Ole, who is Jimmy Tiroff reborn. By this time Rufus Collins was having his third or fourth screaming fit about his rights as a person.

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The assembly, which included most of New York's theatre highbrows as well as others, reacted half in silent amazement, half in outraged cursing and screaming at the disrupters. Arguments were breaking out all over the hall between individual Living Theatre radicals and clusters of suddenly impassioned members of the audience, who charged fascism and no getting their money's worth, principally. (The event was a $10 a head benefit for the Theatre for Ideas.) During a lull Julian Beck suggested that we get used to this: "it's coming attractions." Otherwise, Beck and his wife took no part, but sat back visiting with people on the dais, now jammed. The Becks had clearly not expected their company to do this; they weren't surprised either.

. . The last podium event before complete chaos was the advent of Norman Mailer, to whom the assembly reacted as if playing a trump card. Mailer went to the dais, took a mike, and asked for quiet. There was a lot of applause, then he got his quiet. (Somebody near me said, "Shhh, God is speaking," in a tone which was more admiring than ironic.) Mailer assumed what looked like a cross between a barricades pose and a send-up of a barricades pose, but might be his regular stance, and said some things about the French revolution. These were short observations which he interspersed with long pauses for assessment if not for effect. During one of those, Israel yelled, "Mailer, you should have sent up your suit," and started jumping around on a pew. Ole was cheek to cheek with Mailer and doing faggot imitations of his now heated replies to Israel. But it was all over, and Mailer knew it. He gave up his address to the assembly and turned his attention to the people, presumably fans, who were pressing around him.

When Richard Schechner took the mike and asked for one minute of silent meditation, it was already too late; the authority of the dais had been quashed. Brustein and Goodman, indeed, had already exited. Hentoff, unruffled, remained. The floor of the hall was in an uproar: Collins, Israel, and now Julian Beck argued heatedly with all comers. You didn't have to be an elitist about art or a munitions manufacturer to qualify for the denunciations. Just being there, paying $10 to hear intellectuals talk, brought vituperation on your head. It was even assumed that being there meant that you wouldn't be at the Jerry Rubin rally the next day. Only God protected those who were also wearing the skins of slaughtered animals. From time to time various free spirits and other radicals seized the mikes and said their various things about freedom and true community.

Most people stayed on and on, drinking the beer and booze which the Theatre for Ideas had provided. Everyone was on his feet, many on the pews in the meeting hall, talking, laughing, yelling, having a good time, really. It was impossible to know what was happening beyond a three-foot radius around one, so one stopped bothering to try. It was a nice feeling, very intimate and potentially personal.

—*The Village Voice*, March 27, 1969

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POVERTY, WELFARE, AND INCOME MAINTENANCE: I

Income and welfare in New York City

DAVID M. GORDON

UNTIL very recently Americans paid almost no attention to information about the distribution of income in this country. For one thing, we totally ignored available facts about the persistence of poverty. We also neglected important data about the shares of the pie consumed by different groups among the nonpoor—probably because the flush of post-war prosperity convinced us that everyone was doing equally well.

Only in the 1960's did we begin to organize and publicize bits of income distribution data. We suddenly recognized that millions of Americans continued to live in poverty, and arguments began to rage about the exact numbers of the poor. Some standard definitions of poverty emerged from the debates. At first, families with less than $3,000 income were considered poor. Then the perception that consumption needs varied by family size forced the adjustment of poverty incomes for the number of people in a family; those adjustments

The data presented in this article were developed as part of a policy-planning project conducted by the Bureau of the Budget, Office of the Mayor, New York City. The author would particularly like to thank Peter Goldmark, Jon Weiner, and Al Appleton. The data estimation was collective; the interpretations and analyses are the author's responsibility.

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led to some widely accepted estimates of the number of poor Americans.

But the problem is really not the exact line at which one defines poverty, but the shares of income going to different groups in the society. Serious attention to the shape of the income distribution is overdue, for many recent debates about public policy have depended completely on our assumptions about changes in the dispersion of income. In New York City, examples abound. If we knew how many poor people live in the city and how those numbers had been changing during the 1960's, we could begin to choose sensibly among the welter of conflicting explanations for the rapid growth of welfare in New York. Equally, if public officials knew more about how many of the white middle class remain in the city, how many have moved to the suburbs, and how much the less affluent middle class must struggle to subsist in New York, they could be more responsive to the cries of neglect among lower middle class whites. And if they knew how many people were clustered in income brackets where the tax bite is most severe, perhaps policies addressed to the "taxpayers' revolt" could evolve less capriciously.

The mysterious 1960's

In all these New York City examples, the crucial developments have occurred *since* 1960—the last year for which reliable and detailed income distribution information exists. The explosion of the welfare caseload began in 1966, six years after the decennial census. Inflation—and consequent middle class complaints—began as late as 1967. The rapid increase in city, state, and even federal taxes started about the same time.

Unfortunately, postcensus information about income distribution is simply not available in detail for an individual city—even one as large as New York. One has therefore been forced to guess about most of these developments and their causes since 1960. Because New York is in many ways unique, the transposition of national trends on to the local situation has seemed an almost hopeless exercise.

The principal purpose of this article is to present some new estimates of the income distribution in New York City for the years since the 1960 census, and to relate them to some of the issues of current importance in the city. The information to be presented has not been available before. Based on an extremely detailed income distribution estimated for January 1968, I shall provide information about household income by race, age, sex of head of household, and family size. The underlying distribution was born more or less by Caesarean section—delivered by statistical surgery on various surveys and reports of local trends. A few reasonable assumptions and guesses were indispensable. The figures are in no sense official, in that they do

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not depend at any level on U.S. Bureau of the Census data. As estimates, they have been developed through an ad hoc process not normally acceptable by academic or statistical standards. Most analysts, presumably, would have been reluctant to endure the contortions necessary to produce some of the more recent figures.[1]

Despite their unusual origins, however, the estimates can be presented with confidence that they do not seriously distort reality. In the course of their development, they were subjected to several independent tests of their reliability. In view of the necessarily tentative methods by which the distributions were calculated, the results of these tests offer surprisingly strong confirmation of the numbers' accuracy.

First, they were compared with a recent Census Bureau estimate of the number of white and nonwhite families living below the "poverty line" in New York City in March 1968. These are the only official estimates available about the city's income distribution for recent years. Because poverty lines differ by type of family, the comparison required that we develop our own estimates of household income by race, sex of head of household, and family size. Our distribution produced totals within 5 per cent of the "official" figures, a statistically acceptable margin of error used by the census itself in discussing the reliability of its New York figures.[2]

Second, we used our estimates of the growth of the number and kinds of households *eligible* for welfare to "predict" retroactively the growth in the city welfare caseload from January 1968 to June 1968. Our predictions missed the real numbers by only 1 per cent, an error 12.5 times smaller than that obtained if we had simply projected past trends in the caseload itself.

Third, the numbers have provided a more reliable anticipation of the demand for Medicaid in New York City than any other sets of figures available. All other income distribution estimates apparently underestimate the number of people whose incomes fall in the range that would qualify them for Medicaid benefits.

With these tests as a basis for some confidence in the numbers, therefore, I feel relatively secure that the interest and usefulness of the estimates described below substantially outweigh their potential inaccuracies. I want, first, to present a variety of information about the income distribution in New York City for 1968; second, to discuss changes since 1960; and third, carefully to relate that information to the welfare "crisis."

I hope to work toward answering the following central questions: How many New Yorkers share in the city's glittering mountains of

[1] A description of the methodology used is available from the author on request.
[2] Specifically, our estimate exceeded that of the Census Bureau by 4.8 per cent, an excess at least partially attributable to our attempt to compensate slightly for some of the "unfound" black males notoriously missing from census surveys.

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corporate wealth? How authentic are the apocalyptic cries of the white lower middle class? Has the welfare "crisis" been caused by migration, by the burgeoning welfare rights movement, by plain poverty, or by more imponderable phenomena? The answers, however tentative, seem quite shocking.

The New York City income distribution

It is always difficult to organize information about income distributions in meaningful ways. Table 1 presents our estimate of the basic income distribution of New York City's total population in January 1968. By itself, the table reveals relatively little. Without information about family size, one cannot make sensible interpretations about poverty and differential standards of living. In Table 1, for instance, all those in large families could conceivably be concentrated near the bottom, middle, or top of the income scale, or scat-

TABLE 1. *Income Distribution of the New York City Population by Household Income, January 1968.*

INCOME CLASS ($1000)*	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	PER CENT OF POPULATION
0–1	193,363	2.4
1–2	409,295	5.1
2–3	525,573	6.6
3–4	698,771	8.8
4–5	676,881	8.5
5–6	867,076	10.8
6–7.5	1,416,085	17.8
7.5–10	1,274,952	16.0
10–15	1,118,911	14.0
15 & over	795,093	10.0
Total	7,975,930	100.0

* Refers to total household income earned during 1967. Columns may not add to totals owing to rounding.

tered evenly throughout. In each case, the table would invite very different conclusions. A poor, large family is not circumstantially identical with an equal number of poor, unrelated individuals. The federally defined poverty line moves upward with family size, as do "moderate" family budgets recently calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In view of those limitations, I have tried to massage the information into some more useful tabulations.

The first transfiguration comes easily. Table 2 presents the income distribution for families, rather than for total people within households. (A household is frequently more or less than a family.) It also separates families ethnically, affording comparisons of the relative affluence of white and minority families. It will be seen that the total distribution of *families* by income class does not differ very substantially from the total income distribution of *people*. The pro-

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portions of families within each income class with different numbers of children tend to remain fairly constant; families at the lower end of the income scale are larger, as one expects, but not by very much.

TABLE 2. *Income Distribution of New York City Families by Ethnicity, January 1968.*

INCOME CLASS ($1000)*	WHITE FAMILIES NO.	%	BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN NO.	%	TOTAL NO.	%
0–1	17,000	1.1	20,600	3.3	37,600	1.7
1–2	35,500	2.3	63,100	10.6	98,600	4.6
2–3	55,600	3.6	69,500	11.4	125,100	5.8
3–4	78,800	5.1	120,200	19.6	199,000	9.2
4–5	101,900	6.6	76,800	12.6	178,700	8.3
5–6	173,000	11.2	70,500	11.7	243,500	11.3
6–7	185,400	12.0	60,900	10.0	246,300	11.4
7–8	173,000	11.2	41,400	6.8	214,400	10.0
8–9	132,800	8.6	25,000	4.1	157,800	7.3
9–10	92,700	6.0	18,900	3.1	111,600	5.2
10–11	78,800	5.1	10,400	1.7	89,200	4.1
11–12	63,300	4.1	5,500	0.9	68,800	3.2
12–13	52,500	3.4	4,300	0.7	57,800	2.7
13–14	44,800	2.9	2,400	0.4	47,200	2.2
14–15	37,000	2.4	1,200	0.2	38,200	1.8
15 & over	222,500	14.4	17,600	2.9	240,100	11.1
Total	1,546,000	100.0	608,700	100.0	2,153,900	100.0

* Refers to total income earned during 1967. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100. Columns may not add to totals owing to rounding.

Table 2 suggests some other, much more startling conclusions, however. Apparently, the differences in the distributions of white and minority family incomes have remained extremely large, despite the contributions of welfare, poverty programs, and scattered minority gains in employment opportunity. The proportion of black and Puerto Rican families with household incomes below $4,000 is almost four times as great as the incidence of white families within that range. Conversely, the proportion of white families with incomes over $10,000 is almost five times as great as the percentage of minority families. Although the ratio of minority to white families overall is only two to five, the ratio of minority to white families with incomes below $4,000 is three to two.

Figure 1 illustrates the ethnic comparison strikingly. The unusual peak in the curve for minority families stems from two factors: the increasing reliance of minority families on welfare income during the 1960's has concentrated many with average family sizes into a small range of the distribution; and an extremely high portion of Puerto Rican families fall within the $3,000 to $4,000 class—roughly

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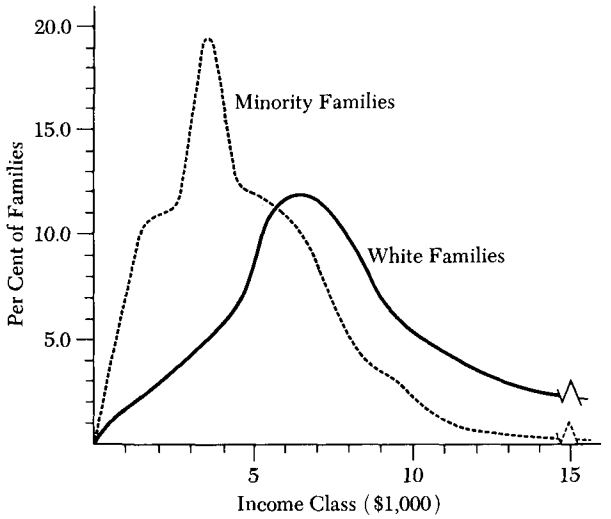

FIGURE 1. *Family Income Distribution for White and Minority Families, New York City, January 1968.*

one quarter of Puerto Rican families. The latter phenomenon, in turn, probably stems from the heavy reliance of Puerto Rican men with poor English and little education on jobs paying near the minimum wage.

Unfortunately, even Table 2 and Figure 1 do not illumine the shape of New Yorkers' well-being very clearly. Within any given income class, some families with few or no children could be living very comfortably, whereas other families with three, four, or more children could be struggling to fill their mouths.

For example, about 304,000 households—including single individuals—received between $10,000 and $15,000 income during 1967. Of these households, there were roughly 45,000 singles, 65,000 couples, and 81,000 families with one child. All were living quite comfortably, generally above what the Bureau of Labor Statistics calls a "higher than moderate" standard of living for their respective family sizes. On the other hand, 68,000 families of four in this income bracket did only fairly well, falling roughly between the "modest but adequate" budget level and the "higher than moderate" standard. Nearly half of the 45,000 families with five or more members enjoyed even less than the "modest but adequate" level of consumption, scrambling to stretch their incomes.

Clearly, then, one needs to standardize family income by family size in order best to appreciate the relative poverty or affluence of different groups of New York City residents. Some studies already count the numbers of people living below "poverty lines" as these

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vary by family size, but no one has ever divided the nonpoor into such standardized income classes. Because the increasingly noisy clatter about the costs of New York City hinge not on income but on how adequately income provides for family members at all levels, I have made some special calculations to evaluate these kinds of complaints. The results are very interesting. Briefly, they suggest that a clear majority of New Yorkers have every reason to complain loudly.

The classes of New York

To begin with, I have defined five standardized income classes, relying on four official budget standards as boundaries. Each budget standard defines a certain quality of standard of living and then calculates the income required by different family sizes to achieve that standard of living.

The first level is the Social Security Administration's family-adjusted "poverty line." All families living below the poverty line for their family size are considered poor. For average families of four living in New York City in 1967, $3,500 annual income was required to reach the poverty line.

The next three boundary standards come from a very recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In that study, BLS defined the quantities and qualities of goods required for a "modest but adequate" standard of living, and then calculated the costs of achieving that standard for different metropolitan areas in 1967. In New York City, an average family of four required $9,400 during 1967 to maintain that standard. The study also calculated the costs of a "lower than moderate" standard and a "higher than moderate" standard for different family sizes. The annual cost of the former for a family of four in New York was $6,000, whereas the cost of the latter was $14,500.

The study described the differences among the three standards quite simply. The middle, moderate, "modest but adequate" standard centers around an inflection point at which "families stop buying 'more and more' of a category of goods and services and begin buying other goods or items of higher quality." At the "lower than moderate" level, "this goal has not yet been reached"; at the "higher than moderate" level, "it has been exceeded."[3]

Calculating these four budget levels and standardizing them by family size finally permits the definition of some relatively meaningful "constant consumption" income classes for New York City. The five classes, with their respective qualitative and quantitative descriptions, follow:

[3] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Three Standards of Living," *Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin*, No. 1570–5 (1969), p. 4.

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CLASS I "poor" families; $0 to $3,500 annual income for a family of four.

CLASS II "low income" families earning between the poverty line and the "lower than moderate" budget level; $3,500 to $6,000 for a family of four.

CLASS III "modest income" families receiving between the "lower than moderate" and "modest but adequate" standards; $6,000 to $9,400 for a family of four.

CLASS IV "moderate income" families receiving between the "modest but adequate" and the "higher than moderate" standards; $9,400 and to $14,500 for a family of four.

CLASS V "affluent families" receiving above the "higher than moderate" budget level; above $14,500 for a family of four.

Having defined those five standardized income classes, I distributed everyone in New York City among the five classes according to their household income and family size. The data immediately provoke an endless stream of observations. The following seem most important.

1. Most people in New York live sparely. Table 3 presents the distribution of people and families among the five classes. As the

TABLE 3. *Distribution of New York residents and families* among "constant consumption" income classes, January 1968.*

	CLASS	PER CENT OF PEOPLE	PER CENT OF FAMILIES*
I	Poor families	15.3	10.7
II	Low income families	21.2	18.6
III	Modest income families	27.0	27.9
IV	Moderate income families	19.5	23.4
V	Affluent families	17.0	19.4
		100.0	100.0

* Excluding families with heads sixty-five years or older.

first column shows, 15.3 per cent of New York City residents live in poor families. Nearly half live in "low income" and "modest income" families. Almost two thirds of New Yorkers live in families receiving less than a "modest but adequate" income for their family sizes. Barely more than a third live in families with incomes above that, and only 17 per cent live in affluent families, despite the concentration of corporate wealth in the city.

The second column suggests a somewhat similar picture. In tabulating the distribution of families or households throughout, I have excluded single individuals sixty-five-years-old and above, and families of two with heads of sixty-five or over, on the premise that the elderly have such an entirely different relationship to income than

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all other families that including them in general distributions would uselessly bias the results. Thus, the second column of Table 3 distributes families (excluding single individuals) headed by a resident under sixty-five years. In Classes IV and V, the proportion of families is slightly higher than that of people, and conversely for Classes I and II. This simply confirms a recurrent trend in central cities: the poorer families are larger, and the more affluent large families move outside the central city into the suburbs.

2. Table 4 distributes families separated by ethnicity, presenting distributions among the five classes for white and minority families (with heads under sixty-five). The differences are staggering.

TABLE 4. *Distribution of families* in New York among "constant consumption" income classes, January 1968, by ethnicity.*

	INCOME CLASS	PER CENT OF WHITE FAMILIES*	PER CENT OF BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN FAMILIES*
I	Poor families	3.7	28.4
II	Low income families	13.6	31.1
III	Modest income families	29.6	23.3
IV	Moderate income families	27.5	13.0
V	Affluent families	25.6	4.2
		100.0	100.0

* Excluding families with heads of sixty-five and over.

Although minority families represent only 28.6 per cent of all families in the city, they comprise a full 75.6 per cent of "poor" families, almost half (47.9 per cent) of "low income" families, and only 6.3 per cent of "affluent" families.

Organizing the numbers in a different way, a full 59.5 per cent of minority families fall into Classes I and II, compared with only 17.3 per cent of white families. Almost exactly conversely, 53.1 per cent of white families are in Classes IV and V, compared with only 17.2 per cent of minority families.

3. Even more meaningful comparisons emerge from distinguishing between those households with children and those without. The latter include single individuals and couples, whereas the former include families of two with one child (primarily female-headed families) and all families of three or more. (Again, families headed by the elderly are excluded.) Among households without the responsibilities of supporting children, exactly two thirds are "moderate income." In short, households without children live very comfortably in New York.

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On the other hand, less than one third of families with children live in Classes IV and V, a full 36.2 per cent are "poor" and "low income," and another 31.8 per cent receive "modest" incomes. Families with children have more difficulty, and quite dramatically so.

4. More dramatically still, the differences between households with and without children by ethnicity seem extraordinary. Among white singles and couples, nearly half (47.2 per cent) live in Class V alone, and more than three quarters (76.3 per cent) receive more than a "modest but adequate" income.

In extraordinarily sharp contrast, only 9.5 per cent of black and Puerto Rican families with children live in Classes IV and V combined, more than one third (33.8 per cent) are "poor" alone, another 34.8 per cent receive "low" incomes, and the remaining 22.0 per cent live "modestly."

The other two groups, white families with children and minority households without, are distributed among the classes in much more similar proportions. Of white families with children, 42.6 per cent live in Classes IV and V, whereas 41.8 per cent of minority singles and couples live at the same levels. Only 21.1 per cent of white families with children live in Classes I and II, whereas 31.5 per cent of black and Puerto Rican households without receive "poor" or "low" incomes. The remainder—36.5 per cent of the whites and 26.8 per cent of the black and Puerto Ricans—live "modestly."

5. At an even more specific level, the different distributions for different family size groups further confirm the relative poverty of larger families. Among white families with children, the distributions of families with two, three, or four members and those with five, six, or more members differ sharply. Within the former group, nearly half (48 per cent) of the families live in Classes IV and V, and only 15.2 per cent live in Classes I and II. In contrast, only 23.3 per cent of white families with five, six, or more members live in Classes IV and V, whereas 42.4 per cent of those families live in Classes I and II.

The same kind of differences appear for minority families with children. Of those with five, six, or more members, over half (51.4 per cent) are poor, 32.9 per cent receive "low" incomes, and the remaining 15.7 per cent live in Class III or above. On the other hand, only 24.8 per cent of black and Puerto Rican families with two, three, or four members live in poverty, whereas 39.4 per cent receive "modest," "moderate," or "affluent" incomes.

6. Those comparisons can be sliced in another way. One of the impressions suggested by reams of cross-tabulations is that *the distribution of minority households simply lags one class behind that* and "affluent" households, and the remaining third are split evenly between Classes I and II on the one hand and Class III on the other.

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for white households. Thus, the family size distributions within "constant consumption" classes for the ethnic groups match almost perfectly *if* minority households within one class are compared with white households in the class directly above. For instance, as Table 5 shows, the family size distribution of minority families in Classes III–IV matches the family size distribution of white families in Classes IV–V; similarly, minority families in Classes I–II match white families in Classes II–III.

TABLE 5. *Per Cents in Family Size Groups.**

	SINGLES AND COUPLES	ONE CHILD	4, 5, 6, OR MORE MEMBERS	TOTAL
1 White households in Classes IV–V	57.8	25.9	16.3	100.0
Minority households in Classes III–IV	57.0	26.4	16.6	100.0
2 White households in Classes II–III	19.7	29.7	50.6	100.0
Minority households in Classes I–II	23.2	26.4	50.4	100.0

* Excluding families headed by the elderly.

The few crucial categories

Though perhaps a bit bewildering, all the observations in points one to six above seem to lead in one direction. Using the five "constant consumption" income classes as bench marks, one can begin to see how heavily the city's population is concentrated in just a few crucial socioeconomic categories. Most meaningfully, one can consider the distribution of the population (excluding those in families headed by the elderly) among twenty ethnic family-consumption cells: the five standard income classes for white and minority families with and without children. If everyone were distributed equally among all those cells, each cell would contain 5 per cent of the 7.335 million people in families headed by citizens under sixty-five. To a striking degree, however, the population clusters in eight of the twenty cells. Those eight cells seem to represent four distinct groups: first, white families with children living on "low" or "modest" incomes (Classes II–III), a group one could choose to characterize as the white working and lower middle class; second, white families with children living very comfortably (in Classes IV–V); third, black and Puerto Rican families with children living in or near poverty (Classes I–II); and fourth, whites without children living very comfortably (Classes IV–V). Together, those four groups include 81.8 per cent of the 7.335 million. Every other cell includes less than 5 per cent of that total. Table 6 details the concentration within those four groups.

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Table 6 needs to be considered carefully. It suggests that the pool of people who must struggle to subsist in New York remains extremely large. Although minority families must endure acute poverty, many white families live only relatively more comfortably. The largest identifiable group of city residents—the white working and lower middle class—lives modestly at best, in near poverty at worst. However the city's politics evolve, the two groups of struggling families—whites in Classes II–III and minority families in Classes I–II—will continue to dominate the life style of the city's economy. Now they comprise almost exactly half the population in families with heads under sixty-five. In the future, their share may even exceed 50 per cent as more affluent whites continue to leave the city.

At the same time, it may become increasingly true that the city's more affluent citizens live in childless families. Before very long, a full quarter of the households represented in Table 6 may be clustered among relatively affluent white singles and couples, with no children around to share the goods.

Above all, the table crystallizes the difference between looking at income alone, and looking at the standard of living that income can afford. Thousands of jobs in New York pay extremely high salaries.

TABLE 6. *Distribution of Residents and Households* among Socioeconomic Groups.*

	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	PER CENT OF TOTAL PEOPLE	PER CENT OF HOUSEHOLDS
1. Four major groups			
a. White families with children (Classes II-III)	2,161,936	29.4	21.2
b. white families with children (Classes IV-V)	1,466,042	20.0	16.8
c. Minority families with children (Classes I–II)	1,454,009	19.8	12.6
d. White households without children (Classes IV–V)	923,684	12.6	22.9
2. Six minor groups			
a. Minority families with children (Class III)	356,835	4.9	4.1
b. White households without children (Classes I-III)	271,336	3.7	7.1
c. Minority households without children (Classes I-III)	230,364	3.2	7.0
d. Minority households without children (Classes IV–V)	190,361	2.6	5.0
e. White families with children (Class I)	148,900	1.8	1.5
f. Minority families with children (Classes IV–V)	132,100	2.0	1.8
	7,335,567	100.0	100.0

* Excluding families headed by the elderly.

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Particularly if one lives on the Upper East Side in Manhattan, one is sometimes convinced that everyone in the city has cash to burn. Unfortunately, many residents of the city who most need all that money are not getting it. If anyone needed reminding, Marx's dictum —"from each . . . to each . . ."—hardly applies in New York.

Poverty persists

We assume that the situation described above represents a change since 1960. But how? Have the affluent with children only recently begun to leave for the suburbs? Have prices outstripped earnings among low and modest income families? Has the incidence of poverty increased in the city since 1960?

Unfortunately, relatively few of these kinds of questions can be answered. The Bureau of Labor Statistics did not begin estimating its three budget standards until well after 1960, precluding comparisons of the distribution of families among Classes II through V for 1960 and 1968. No other sources allow similar definitions of "constant consumption" income classes for use with the 1960 census.

TABLE 7. *Income Distribution of New York City Families by Ethnicity, 1960.*

INCOME CLASS	WHITE		BLACK AND PUERTO RICAN		TOTAL	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
0–1	38,800	2.3	23,600	6.0	62,400	3.0
1–2	65,800	3.9	30,500	7.8	96,300	4.6
2–3	92,800	5.5	43,400	11.1	136,200	6.6
3–4	131,600	7.8	59,000	15.1	190,600	9.2
4–5	167,100	9.9	60,600	15.5	227,700	11.0
5–6	214,400	12.7	56,700	14.5	271,100	13.0
6–7	200,800	11.9	43,000	11.0	243,800	11.7
7–8	155,300	9.2	22,700	5.8	178,000	8.6
8–9	119,800	7.1	14,100	3.6	133,900	6.4
9–10	94,500	5.6	8,200	2.1	102,700	4.9
10–11	76,000	4.5	6,300	1.6	82,300	4.0
11–12	59,100	3.5	4,300	1.1	63,400	3.0
12–13	49,000	2.9	2,900	.9	51,900	2.5
13–14	38,900	2.3	2,300	.6	41,200	2.0
14–15	32,100	1.9	2,100	.5	34,200	1.6
15 plus	151,900	9.0	11,100	2.8	163,000	7.8
Total	1,687,800	100.0	390,800	100.0	2,078,600	100.0

*Income refers to total income received in 1959. Figures for $1,000 classes from $10,000 to $15,000 have been interpolated. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred. Columns may not add to totals owing to rounding.

Two kinds of comparisons can be made. First, the basic distribution of families among less meaningful *unstandardized* income classes can be compared for 1960 and 1968. Table 7 presents the same information for 1959 incomes (in 1967 prices) as did Table 2 for 1967 incomes (in current prices). Comparison of the two tables affords a

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rough feeling for the trends of income among white and minority families. Figures 2 and 3 present those comparisons graphically.

As both the tables and figures show, *whites have improved their economic position since 1960, whereas minority groups have not.* During the period between 1960 and 1968, the number of white families (excluding Puerto Ricans, who are counted as whites in the census) in New York City declined from about 1.688 million to about

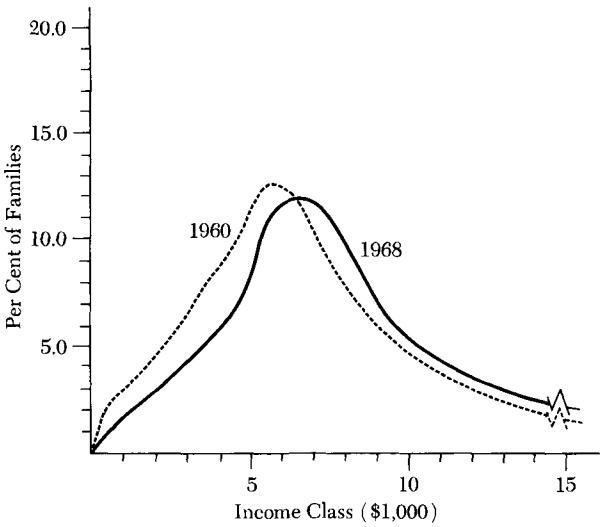

FIGURE 2. *Family Income Distribution for Whites, New York City, 1960 and 1968 Compared (in Constant 1968 Dollars).*

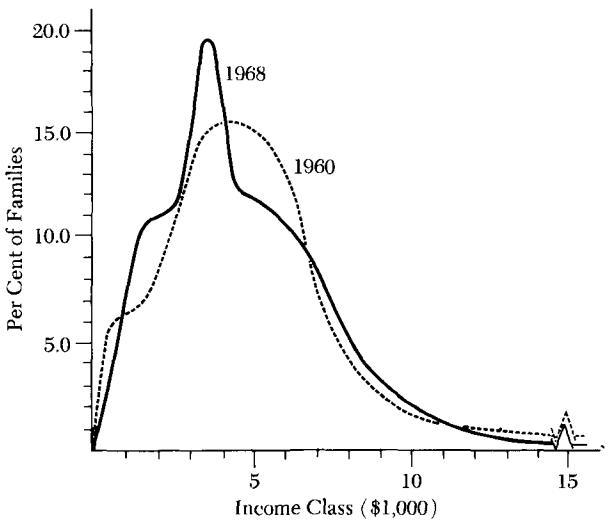

FIGURE 3. *Family Income Distribution for blacks and Puerto Ricans, New York City, 1960 and 1968 Compared (in Constant 1968 Dollars).*

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1.546 million. Many families who left the city presumably came out of the middle income ranges. The fact that white families moved up in income so uniformly over the entire income distribution, despite the loss of many middle income families to the suburbs, gives strong evidence of the extent to which whites were able to take advantage of prosperity during that period.

For minority groups, the graphs depict much starker developments. The number of minority families increased from about 391,000 to about 609,000, reflecting substantial in-migration of both black and Puerto Rican families and the steady high rates of family formation among young black and Puerto Rican adults. It is impossible to determine from our information how the income of in-migrants compared with that of continuing minority residents. Whatever the case, the combined effect of in-migration and the failure of many low wage jobs to keep pace with rising prices created an extremely large concentration in the income class from $3,000 to $4,000.

A second, more meaningful kind of comparison can be made. Although defined and calculated in 1964, the Social Security Administration's family-adjusted poverty levels were also calculated for 1960. With these levels in hand, one can, with minimal statistical exertion, compare the changes in size and composition of the poor in New York City. Indeed, the U.S. Bureau of the Census recently released that set of calculations. Although my own estimates differ slightly from theirs, we come to the same conclusion. No matter what the source of estimates, poverty has declined only slightly in New York since 1960.

The Census Bureau estimated in February 1969 that about 10 per cent of the families (or 208,000 families) in New York in early 1968 had had incomes below their respective poverty lines in 1967. Including single individuals, this amounted to a little more than 1 million people, so that this 10 per cent of New York's families amounted to about 13 per cent of the city's total population. By official standards, this represented a slight decrease since 1960 in the numbers of families living in poverty; then—again according to the census—266,000 families, or 13 per cent of the city's families, had lived below the poverty line in 1960 prices.

Unfortunately, those official estimates understate the extent of poverty in New York City in 1968 in two ways. First, the poverty lines used are measured in 1966 prices, ignoring the increase in prices from 1966 through 1967 (about 2.6 per cent for New York City). Second, they neglect the extent to which prices in New York City are higher than the average for all cities in the United States (by about 3 per cent for families at the "lower than moderate" income level). Taking those two factors into account, one gets a considerably higher estimate of the city's poverty population—largely be-

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cause so many people are concentrated in the narrow ranges of the income distribution affected by the margin of those price adjustments.

Having incorporated those adjustments in the official poverty criteria, our estimates suggest the following conclusions about changes in poverty in New York City during the 1960's:

1. *There has been very little decline since 1960 in the number of New York families living in poverty.* In January 1968, about 11.5 per cent of the families in New York—or 245,000 families—had 1967 incomes below their respective poverty lines. This represented a decrease of only 21,000 poor families since 1960 and a 1.5 per cent decline in the percentage of total families living in poverty. Further, the total number of people living in poor families (including single individuals) increased from slightly more than 1 million in 1960 to 1.22 million in 1968, and from 13 per cent to 15 per cent of the total population. The increase in total people in poor families stems both from a larger average family size among poor families and from a slight increase in the number of poor single individuals.[4]

2. *Though slight, the decrease in poor families in New York reflected greater improvement than in the other two large American cities for which similar comparisons can be made.* Census estimates of poverty in Chicago and Los Angeles adjusted for the same price factors as the New York numbers portray poverty more tenacious than in New York. From 1960 to 1968, the percentage of families in poverty actually increased in Chicago, from 13 per cent to 15.4 per cent. In Los Angeles, the percentage of families in poverty decreased, but even less than in New York—from 12 per cent to 10.8 per cent.

3. *The composition of poor families in New York has changed radically since 1960.* In 1960, about 25 per cent of the poor families in New York were nonwhite, about 18 per cent were Puerto Rican, and about 57 per cent were white. By 1968, nonwhites comprised 39 per cent of the poor families, Puerto Ricans 29 per cent, and whites only 32 per cent. In short, minority families represented 43 per cent of poor families in 1960, a bare minority; by 1968, their total share had increased to just under 70 per cent, a clear majority. Further, their share of poor families with heads under sixty-five years had reached about 76 per cent.

4. *The absolute numbers of poor minority families increased very*

[4] The differences in trends for people and families exist nationally too. From 1959 to 1966, the ratio of nonwhite to white family units in poverty nationally remained constant at 2.52 to 1. For individuals, however, the ratio of nonwhites to whites in poverty rose from 3.03 to 1 in 1959 to 3.41 to 1 in 1966.

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rapidly as well. In 1960, there were about 114,000 poor black and Puerto Rican families. By 1968, the number of poor minority families had grown to about 166,000, an increase over 1960 of roughly 46 per cent. Conversely, the numbers of poor white families decreased significantly from about 142,000 in 1960 to about 79,000 in 1968.

5. *Both relatively and absolutely, the trends in minority group poverty traced a very different path in New York from that in other central cities.* The absolute number of nonwhite families living in poverty in all American central cities declined, in the years 1960 to 1968, from 783,000 to 665,000, according to the same Census Bureau estimates (which do not give separate data for Spanish-speaking minority groups). As noted above, the absolute number of poor minority families increased in New York City. In addition, the proportion of nonwhite families living in poverty declined by even larger degrees in all central cities after 1960, dropping from 37 to 26 per cent; the incidence of poverty among minority families in New York remained nearly constant, dropping from 29 to 28 per cent.

The city's welfare burden

Despite the indications of all those trends, the persistence of poverty in New York City does not by itself go very far toward explaining its enormous welfare burden, as some simple comparisons with other cities can show. In early 1968, according to the same adjusted Census Bureau estimates, New York City had a total of 245,000 families living in poverty. Chicago had about 130,000 families in poverty, and Los Angeles-Long Beach had about 89,000. Yet in February 1968, about 780,000 people received welfare in New York City (excluding the aged) compared with about 271,000 in Chicago and 200,000 in Los Angeles-Long Beach (also excluding the aged). Thus, although the ratio of New York's poor families to the total of poor families in the other two central cities combined was only 1.12 to 1, the ratio of welfare populations was 1.67 to 1. New York had about twice as many poor families as Chicago, but almost three times as many welfare clients. It had around three times as many poor families as Los Angeles-Long Beach, but almost four times as many people on welfare.

A variety of explanations can be offered for the relatively heavier burden of public assistance in New York than in Chicago and Los Angeles. One that seems most direct centers around the level of welfare benefits in the three cities. In February 1968, recipients of Aid to Families of Dependent Children received an average of $60.60 a month in New York, $44.70 in Illinois, and $44.75 a month in California. The ratio of AFDC recipients to numbers of poor families is

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greater in New York City than in the other two cities by roughly the same degree as the average grants per AFDC recipients in New York are higher.

If that slightly obscure relationship has any meaning, it must be that high welfare grant levels automatically create large numbers of welfare eligibles because of the grants' relation to the income distribution. New York State, almost alone in the country, has finally offered welfare grants that match or exceed the federally defined poverty level. During the recent years in which grants were raised to those levels, thousands of poor families in New York City suddenly became "eligible" for welfare in the simple sense that their total disposable incomes now fell below what they were eligible to receive through welfare benefits or supplementary grants. Many of these families naturally decided to claim what the state had decided to offer.

Once that decision was made, a choice of welfare options—whether the husband should desert and the wife should apply for AFDC or the husband should remain and the entire family should apply for Home Relief—was relatively secondary. Under the AFDC option the family could receive a higher total income if the husband received more than about $1,400 earnings per year from employment and shared them with his family. Under the Home Relief option, the family would receive more if the husband earned less than that. In either case, the latter option presumably has some psychic advantages. The two programs have grown rapidly over the past few years, with Home Relief increasing a bit more quickly than AFDC.

An obvious initial clue to the causes of recent growth in the welfare caseload, therefore, can be provided by the shape of the income distribution in the range through which welfare grant levels have been rising. If families are packed with high frequency into small ranges affected by grant increases, then large increases in eligibles —and in recipients as a consequence—could easily be expected.

From our estimates, it was in fact possible to calculate for January 1968 the numbers of people in families whose incomes fell below the average welfare grants for their family sizes. We labeled those people the "eligible" population. We estimated that 1.32 million people lived in families eligible for welfare in January 1968, excluding the aged, or about 18 per cent of the city's total population under sixty-five. Of those in eligible families, about 1 million, or 77 per cent, were black or Puerto Rican. Only 6.5 per cent of the white population under sixty-five lived in eligible families, whereas 41.7 per cent of the minority population under sixty-five lived in eligible families. *Because there were only 760,000 people receiving welfare in January 1968* (excluding Old Age Assistance), the pool of "eligibles" was by no means close to exhaustion.

Then, in August 1968, welfare grant levels were increased again,

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by an average of about 7 per cent for AFDC cases, or about $250 per year for a family of four. That slight dollar increase immediately caused an increase of 300,000 in the numbers of eligibles, bringing the total to 1.621 million. After the August increases, close to half the city's minority population lived in eligible families—nearly 1.2 million blacks and Puerto Ricans. Even without further analysis, one would be tempted to ascribe a large bulk of the welfare crisis to the effects of such grant increases. One additional piece of information can serve to strengthen this point.

Between January 1964 and January 1968, average welfare grant levels increased by about 45 per cent in New York State. *If one had known in 1964 what the income distribution in the city looked like, and if one had known further the extent to which welfare grant levels were going to rise over the next four years, one would automatically have expected an enormous increase in welfare.* Because we have this information in hindsight, we have made the calculations we only wish we could have made in 1964. Specifically, we calculated the number of blacks and Puerto Ricans in families whose incomes in 1964 were above 1964 grant levels but below 1968 grant levels. They represented those minority people in the city who would become eligible for welfare during the next four years, in the simple sense that their low incomes would be overtaken by rising welfare grant levels. Because of the extraordinarily dense concentration of minority families in those particular ranges of the income distribution, we estimated that about 400,000 people (excluding the aged), or over 5 per cent of the total city population, fell into that particular category. If we had included whites as well, obviously the numbers would have been much higher. Over 16 per cent of blacks and fully one quarter of Puerto Ricans (excluding the aged) living in New York in 1964 were compressed into those potentially eligible bands of the income distribution. It should be no surprise that many of them later appeared on the welfare rolls.

The rise in the caseload

Table 8 presents the size of the New York City public assistance caseload as it grew during the 1960's. Sometime in March 1969, the total number receiving welfare assistance in New York City passed the 1 million mark. By the time of this article's publication, the level will probably have reached about 1.050 million.

Treating welfare principally as an economic phenomenon—as a source of income for the poor—one can isolate three principal hypotheses as to why New York City's caseload grew so rapidly, particularly after about 1966.

First, the number receiving welfare could have grown because

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an increasing percentage of those eligible for welfare actually chose to receive it (or because the rules permitting eligibles to receive it had become more liberal).

Second, even if the benefits available under welfare had not increased at all, the number of people on welfare could have increased because the number of eligibles increased. This could have occurred because of a downward shift in the income distribution due to in-migration or to the lag of wages behind prices in certain kinds of jobs.

Third, even if the income distribution (measured in constant prices) did not change at all as a result of migration or wage-price effects, the number of people eligible for welfare could have increased because the welfare grant levels (measured in constant prices) increased over time, effectively blanketing into eligibility large numbers of the population.

TABLE 8. *Number of Public Assistance Recipients in New York City.*

DATE	NUMBER (TO NEAREST 1,000)
January 1964	411,000
January 1966	533,000
January 1968	807,000
June 1968	872,000
November 1968	961,000
January 1969	995,000

Needless to say, it is impossible rigorously to separate the actual or potential weight of those three factors. A reasonable guess would have been that all three were operative, and that perhaps the first factor—the increasing propensity of eligibles to claim their benefits —was responsible for the largest share of the increase.

However tentative, our estimates of the income distribution allow a first attempt at an answer that is more than a guess. Using our distributions, we attempted to separate these three factors principally for the period between January 1964 and November 1968. We concluded that *the largest source of the increase in welfare stemmed from the increase in real grant levels, that changes in the income distribution accounted for a smaller share, and that those eligible for welfare showed no greater propensity to join the rolls.*

The basis for these conclusions can be summarized quite quickly.

To begin with, the number of people in eligible families (excluding the aged) was calculated for four different points in time. The calculations were made by the kind of straightforward definitions of eligibility described above. Of these eligibles, a given number were receiving welfare (excluding those receiving Old Age Assistance). Dividing the latter by the former allowed an estimate of the percen-

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tage of eligibles actually receiving public assistance. With the help of the 1960 census, we were able to make such calculations for March 1960, January 1964, January 1968, and November 1968.[5]

TABLE 9. *People Receiving and Eligible for Public Assistance, New York City, 1960–1968.*

DATE	PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS (EXCLUDING OLD AGE ASSISTANCE)	NUMBER IN FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (EXCLUDING THE AGED)	% OF ELIGIBLES ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
March 1960	315,000	530,000	59.3
January 1964	379,000	605,000	62.6
January 1968	760,000	1,324,000	57.4
November 1968	906,000	1,621,000	55.9

Table 9 presents the results of those comparisons. As the table clearly shows, the percentage of eligibles actually receiving welfare has been *declining* slightly over the period since 1964, when the welfare caseload began rapidly to increase. Thus, it appears that those eligible for welfare are no more likely to be receiving assistance than before. As a corollary, it does not appear that more liberal administrative practices have contributed very much to the increase either.

It further follows that the increase in welfare in recent years must necessarily have stemmed from *large* increases in the numbers eligible for welfare. Indeed, as Table 5 shows, between January 1964 and November 1968 the number of people in families eligible for welfare increased by about 170 per cent, whereas the number receiving welfare increased by 140 per cent.

To try to account for the large increases in the numbers of eligibles, we tried to separate this vast increase into two trends. Between January 1964 and November 1968, the number of eligibles (again excluding the aged) grew from about 605,000 to 1.621 million, an increase of almost exactly 1 million. Two factors were cen-

[5] To allow comparability, it was important to compare January 1968 with November 1968 and not, for instance, September 1968. Now that welfare grant levels are so high, thousands of additional families become eligible for welfare each time the grant levels are raised (in constant prices). As soon as the benefits are raised, some of those newly eligible families will begin joining the rolls each month. The first month after the increase in grant levels, the percentage of eligibles on welfare will be much lower than in the fourth month after the increase. So in the recent period, it was important to compare months that came the same length of time after a real benefit increase. The two most recent increases occurred in October 1967 and August 1968. Thus, we compared January 1968 with November 1968, each point coming three months after the benefit increase. For the earlier years, benefits were increased by so little that the month chosen for comparison did not make very much difference.

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tral to that increase: first, the changes in the income distribution which produced absolutely larger numbers of people within given income classes, and second, the increases in real welfare benefits that blanketed in large numbers of people with incomes which would not have qualified them for welfare in 1964.

To estimate the relative magnitude of those two trends, we began by calculating the number of people who would have been eligible for welfare in November 1968 *if there had been no increases in the real level of welfare grants over the intervening fifty-eight months.* To do this, we calculated the number of people in the November 1968 income distribution who had incomes below the average grant levels provided in January 1964, adjusting those grant levels for the general increase in the price level between the two periods. According to our calculations, only 777,000 people would have lived in families eligible for welfare if 1964 real grants had applied in November 1968—an increase of only 172,000 in the number of eligibles from January 1964. By definition, the remaining increase of 844,000 in the number of eligibles occurred because real grant levels increased over the period by between 44 and 47 per cent. (Because grant levels are defined by average benefits received, the measured increase varies somewhat by family size.)

During this period, returning to Table 9, the total number of people receiving welfare (excluding the aged) increased from 379,000 to 906,000, an absolute increase of 527,000. Assuming that a conservative 52 per cent of those blanketed in by grant level increases between 1964 and 1968 actually joined the rolls, one can conclude that 438,000 of the increase in welfare population resulted from the increase in welfare grant levels. That amounts to about 83 per cent of the total increase.

We made one final and important calculation from the same set of figures. As noted, the increase in real grant levels between 1964 and 1968 "caused" an increase of 844,000 in the number of people living in families eligible for welfare. Of that number, some lived in New York in 1964, whereas some arrived between 1964 and 1968, receiving incomes once they arrived which fell into the range over which real grant levels increased. The relative magnitudes of these two groups could also be estimated. By calculating the number of people living in the city in 1964 who would have been eligible if November 1968 grant levels had been in effect in January 1964 (in constant dollars), we get some rough idea of how many people fell into the first group, i.e., the group of new eligibles who were already in the city when the grant increases began. The remainder of the 844,000 presumably arrived in that range of income distribution—either as a result of in-migration or income-slippage—after 1964.

Performing these calculations, we found that roughly 55 per cent

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of the total 844,000 belonged to the first group, the new eligibles already in that range of the distribution in 1964. The remaining 45 per cent arrived in that range of the distribution after 1964.

These results are all summarized in Table 10, which presents our estimates of the statistical components of the increase in eligibles between 1964 and 1968. The implications of the table are quite clear. If New York State had not decided to offer people an income at least equal to what the federal government calls the poverty line, there would be no welfare crisis at all. We would, in its place, have a far greater amount of poverty.

TABLE 10. *Statistical Components of Increase of People in Families Eligible for Public Assistance (Excluding Those Sixty-five and Over), New York City, January 1964 to November 1968.*

	NUMBER	ABSOLUTE INCREASE FROM JANUARY 1964	NET INCREASE	% OF TOTAL INCREASE
1 Number of eligibles in January 1964	605,000	—	—	—
2 Number who would have been eligible in November 1968 if 1964 grant levels were in effect in November 1968	777,000	172,000	172,000	16.8
3 Number who would have been eligible in November 1968 if November 1968 grant levels were in effect and if the January 1964 income distribution had described the situation in November 1968	1,242,000	637,000	465,000	45.8
4 Actual number of eligibles in November 1968, given November 1968 grant levels and November 1968 income distribution	1,621,000	1,016,000	379,000	37.3
			1,016,000	100.0

Conclusions

The implications of such extended statistical calisthenics seem difficult to sort out. One gratuitous observation can be tossed into the mixing bowl quickly. If nothing else, the tortuous rounds of calculations ought to have shown that we can make much more meaningful use of income distribution information than we have in the past. Beyond that, the numbers induce considerable pessimism. In answer to the questions posed too floridly at the beginning:

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¶Relatively few New York residents share in the city's mountains of wealth and income. Those in the city who need the money most are getting inadequate shares.

¶In particular, hundreds of thousands of blacks and Puerto Ricans live in or near poverty, and even greater numbers of whites live on tight budgets, on what I have called "low" or "modest" incomes. The complaints of working and lower middle class whites about their standards of living seem justified.

¶Concomitantly, one can easily argue that the cause of the welfare "crisis" is simply the widespread poverty in the city—not chiseling or welfare rights organizations or liberal administrative practices.

Do rainbows shine across the horizon, inducing more optimistic expectations for the future? Not particularly.

In the first place, inequalities in the distribution of American income have not been declining for over twenty years. One of the verities about income shares that has applied throughout the postwar period in the United States is that the top 5 per cent of the people receive 20 per cent of the income, whereas the bottom 20 per cent of the people receive 5 per cent of the income.

Second, the tax system does nothing to help those who must stretch their budgets most tightly. Every study of the incidence of taxes at all levels of government reports that those receiving between $3,000 and $15,000 annual income pay almost exactly the same proportions of their income in taxes. My own quick calculations for taxes paid by New York City residents suggest exactly the same results. Despite talk of tax reform, that will remain true until absolutely massive federal aid to states and cities permits declines in the level of unprogressive sales and property taxes.

Third, there is little reason to believe that the movement to the suburbs of more affluent families with children will begin to decelerate.

Fourth, the structure of employment earnings—itself an initial cause of inequality of income—will probably not change much either. By the best calculations one can make from available data, about 21 per cent of the jobs available in New York City in 1968 paid less than $80 a week, and another 11 per cent paid between $80 and $90 a week. Roughly one third of the city's jobs, therefore, or about 1.3 million jobs, paid less than $4,600 a year if they were filled continuously. Because a male-headed family of five needs $4,400 a year to stay at the "poverty line," it seems clear that tens of thousands of families will continue to live in poverty—unless wages increase radically or many more females can become dual earners. The former eventuality seems unlikely at the moment. Some very rough calculations suggest that 27 per cent of annual job openings in the city over the next five years will pay less than $90 a week—only barely below the one third of total jobs paying less than

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that now. Although high-paying technical and clerical jobs are opening up rapidly in the city's supply of jobs, so are menial, low-paying service jobs as well.

Perhaps the only pleasant conclusion one can draw concerns the city's fisc. Now that New York State welfare grant levels have reached the poverty lines stipulated by the federal government, it seems likely that they will not rise very much in the future (and, indeed, were even cut by the state this spring). The in-migration of blacks and Puerto Ricans is apparently slowing down. The federal government seems ready to consider greater support of state and local welfare costs. All three factors suggest that the welfare caseload and the city's share of its costs will grow much more slowly in the future.

We can perhaps find solace in a final observation. To the extent that the basic source of discontent in New York is the inadequate dispersion of income, the city's problems do not differ from those of the nation as a whole. The uniqueness of New York is merely that those who suffer—"poor," "low," and "modest income" families alike —seem to complain about it much more vociferously.

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POVERTY, WELFARE, AND INCOME MAINTENANCE: II

Welfare: a crisis without "solutions"

EDWARD C. BANFIELD

THIS article will discuss two questions. First, why has dependency been increasing during a time of full employment, and at a rate unprecedented since the Great Depression? Second, what if anything should be done to reduce dependency?

The facts are startling. In the eighteen years from 1948 to 1965, the welfare rolls of New York City increased by a quarter of a million persons. In the next two years (1966 and 1967) they increased by *another* quarter of a million. And in the following two (1968 and 1969) they are expected—when statistics are available—to show an increase of still *another* quarter of a million at least. Although the increase has been greatest in New York City, it has been dramatic in most large cities. In 1960, fewer than 7 million persons were receiving public assistance in the United States; now more than 9 million are receiving it.

Most of the increase has been in the largest of the public assistance programs—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Except for aid to the totally disabled, which has risen sharply, the other programs—general assistance, aid to the blind, and old age assistance—have had declining caseloads since 1960. When people talk about the "welfare crisis," it is AFDC that they have in mind. The AFDC caseload has grown by 80 per cent since 1960—from 3 million persons to about 5.5 million.

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Almost 60 per cent of the national increase in the AFDC caseload since 1960 has occurred in the five states of New York, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. These states had a third of the total caseload in 1960; now they have *half* of it. New York and California alone account for 44 per cent of the increase since 1960.

The increase in dependency is not be accounted for by an increase in unemployment or poverty. In all of the large urban areas, job opportunities for the least skilled have improved, to one degree or another, over the last five or six years. Migration and other changes in the composition of the population are responsible for a little—but only a little—of the increase. Movement out of the rural south, where it is hard to get welfare, to the large cities, where it is relatively easy to get it, explains some of the national increase. But compared with the 1950's, there has been relatively little movement of this kind in the 1960's. Therefore the question remains: why are so many people getting AFDC and General Assistance *now*, at a time of unprecedented general prosperity?

The effects of payment levels

One plausible explanation is that payment levels have gone up, making welfare a more attractive possibility than it used to be. When I asked a young woman in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn why welfare relief rolls there are increasing, she said, "Welfare is getting to be the best job there is." In New York, the average monthly payment per AFDC family increased from $178 in 1960 to $277 in 1968, a matter of 56 per cent. In that state, and in several others, a man with a wife and child who is employed at the minimum wage earns less than he would get on welfare without working.

It is indeed a fact that the higher a state's payment level, the larger its caseload tends to be. Taking eleven urban states (the five already listed plus Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin) and the District of Columbia one finds a strong (.70) correlation between the size of the average monthly AFDC payment in 1968 and percentage increase in caseload from 1960 to 1968. There is also a correlation, although weaker (.55), between percentage increase in payment levels 1966–1968 and percentage increase in caseload in the same period.

Despite this statistical relation, my Bedford-Stuyvesant friend's explanation may be wrong. Perhaps the correct interpretation of the correlations is that the more politically active poor persons there are in any state the more likely the politicians of the state are to raise payment levels. Or perhaps it is that the poor tend to migrate to large cities and the presence of a large city tends to make a state liberal in its welfare benefits. However this may be, the experience of California makes me skeptical about the proposition that case-

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loads have risen because payment levels have risen. Since 1960, that state has added more than a half million persons—almost as many as New York in both absolute and percentage terms—to its AFDC caseload; but whereas real benefits (benefits that take into account increases in the cost of living) increased by nearly 50 per cent in New York, they did not increase at all in California. In the light of this fact, why should one suppose that it was the increase in payment levels that caused New York's caseload to rise? Perhaps it would have risen anyway, for the same reasons—whatever they may be—that California's did.

Another point deserves mention in this connection. In only three of the urban states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, and New Jersey) did the increase in payment levels from 1960 to 1968 equal the increase in the wages of unskilled factory labor, and only in New York did it exceed it. In most urban states there was a decided decline in the pay of the welfare "job" compared with other jobs of a sort to which the applicant might be expected to turn. One wonders why people would be attracted from jobs to welfare when wages are going up relative to welfare payments.

I do not doubt that increases in payment levels have had a considerable effect on caseload. Some people who were eligible for assistance but had never applied for it have doubtless been stimulated by the increases to do so. Others—a larger number, I suspect—have become eligible by virtue of changes in federal and state laws and, especially, by virtue of increases in family budgetary allowances (the standard by which payment levels are determined); when a state raises its budgetary allowances, all those who were almost, but not quite "poor" by its previous standard are "blanketed in" to eligibility under the new one. Still others—one can only guess how many—have been influenced by increases in the payment level to take certain steps (of which more later) in order to make themselves eligible.

The role of the welfare bureaucracies

Without wishing to minimize the importance of these influences in caseload, I should like to stress another one that seems to be the principal factor accounting for the increase in California and *may* be a second cause of the increase in states where payment levels have risen sharply. (There is, of course, no reason to exclude the possibility of double causation, as in the case of a man who is simultaneously shot and stabbed). This other influence is the behavior of the welfare bureaucracies. As Professors Cloward and Piven have explained, there have always been many more people eligible for welfare than receiving it; and in recent years, in response to pressures generated by the civil rights revolution and the war on pov-

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erty, welfare bureaucracies have given to a large proportion of the poor benefits that they were legally entitled to all along.[1] To put it bluntly, the welfare bureaucracies used to hold back the flood by putting obstacles in the way of applicants and by refusing to help a great many who were legally entitled to help. To some extent, they still do, but not as much as before. Largely because they are letting more people get what they are legally entitled to, caseloads are rising.

Social workers have countless ways of regulating the number and kinds of people who are taken onto the rolls. Every state has its own laws governing eligibility and every county (most local welfare departments are on a county basis) has its own regulations. In Wisconsin, for example, an unwed mother applying for AFDC is required by law to divulge the name of the father of her child and to seek a court order compelling him to support her. If he fails to do so, the social worker is encouraged by the state regulations to go to any of the girl's relatives (not just those legally responsible) and ask them to support her. In the case of a married woman whose husband has deserted her, the law requires as a condition of receiving aid that she must sign a criminal complaint against him. It goes without saying that social workers have an immense amount of discretion in the administration of all such laws and, accordingly, an immense amount of control over both applications and acceptances. Is the effort to get the girl to divulge the name of the father to be serious or *pro forma*? The social worker is the one who decides, and his (or her) decision is likely to determine whether or not the girl will make an application.

In recent years, welfare departments in almost all big cities have become much more liberal. No doubt their attitude reflects basic political changes in the city, state, and nation: the poor and the black have greater voting power in the city and more representation in the state legislature. But perhaps the most important thing is that the federal government, through the various Great Society programs, has taught people to regard welfare as something that is theirs by right and has put the local welfare departments under pressure to give them all that they are legally entitled to. What happened in Baltimore is probably fairly typical. There the AFDC caseload increased from 8,800 to 23,000 between 1960 and 1966, while the number of poor families with children was dropping from 71,000 to 61,000. The reason for the sharp increase, the State Department of Public Welfare found, was mainly that the antipoverty agency financed by OEO made people aware of the availability of AFDC and stimulated them to apply for it. In many cities OEO has hired

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[1] Richard A. Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, "Migration, Politics, and Welfare," *Saturday Review*, November 16, 1968.

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organizers and lawyers to get people on welfare. Client groups have also used the courts and the streets to carry the message to the poor. The National Welfare Rights Organization, formed in 1967, had at last report 161 local units in 70 cities.

In my opinion, the principal underlying causes of the increase in welfare caseload have been these political ones—first, the general ideological change produced by the civil rights movement and the war on poverty and, second, the efforts of militant organizations created under OEO and other auspices to encourage the poor to demand all that they are legally entitled to. These causes have by liberalizing regulations, increased the number of persons eligible for welfare; they have increased the proportion of eligibles applying; they have increased the proportion of applicants found acceptable.

The social costs of welfare

I turn now to my second question: what, if anything, should be done to reduce dependency?

There are those who think that what is mainly wrong with the present system is that it does not give large enough benefits to enough people. In 1965 only 20 per cent of poor persons received public assistance and, of these, 82 per cent remained poor after receiving it. Payment levels are low: the average monthly payment per recipient is only $42.35 (August 1968) and in Mississippi it is a mere $8.50. New York's payment—$69.70—is slightly above the officially defined poverty level, but many people do not consider it enough.

The poor, it is sometimes pointed out, are in a sense less "dependent" than most of the rest of us. In our society almost everybody benefits from some kind of a subsidy and the larger the individual's income the larger the subsidy that he is likely to get. No one seems to boggle at subsidies to homeowners, or farmers, or union members, or businessmen or college students. The amounts that the poor get are small in comparison (public assistance payments have always been about 1 per cent of gross national product); why, then, so much fuss about rising welfare costs?

I will presently try to show that the welfare system entails large *real* costs to the society as opposed to mere transfer of money within it. But even if this were not the case, it seems to me that the answer to the "everyone's-getting-it-why-shouldn't-the-poor-get-it-too" argument is that *no one* should get it. The government should use its power to take from some and give to others, not for the sake of the others, but only for that of the whole society. Except as there is good reason to believe that the whole society is somewhat improved by subsidizing farmers or homeowners or whomever, they should not be subsidized.

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But what if, as a practical matter, taking the subsidies away from the farmers, the homeowners, and all of the others is out of the question; is there not then a case for subsidizing the poor along with everyone else? On grounds of equity the answer is obviously yes. Other considerations than equity have to be taken into account, however, and I am afraid one of these is that it is impossible to devise a welfare system that will deal generously with all of the poor and yet be tolerable from the standpoint of voters and taxpayers who are not poor.

In order to prepare the way for this argument I shall list four sorts of undesirable side effects—social costs—that result from steps that people take either to qualify for benefits under the present welfare system or in consequence of having qualified for them. Except as these side effects can be eliminated (without in the process introducing other kinds that are as bad or worse!) one must, it seems to me, fear that extending and liberalizing the system will do more harm than good.

Moynihan in reverse

1. The welfare system causes the breakup of a great many families. The Moynihan Report of a few years ago theorized that male Negro unemployment caused the breakup of the Negro family and that this in turn caused dependency rates to soar. I suggest that this theory would work better in reverse: it is high AFDC rates that are causing the breakup of the poor—and hence the Negro—family. Moynihan presented a chart showing a remarkable correlation between male Negro unemployment and AFDC cases opened, but the correlation ceased after 1962. What happened after that year—the continued rise of the AFDC caseload in the face of a decline in male Negro unemployment—as well as what happened before it, can be explained by putting his theory in reverse.

The fact is that the AFDC program offers low-income parents strong financial incentives to separate. The family may be able to get on welfare only if the father leaves or pretends to leave ("fiscal abandonment"). The kind of welfare that is easiest for them to get is AFDC, whose funds come almost entirely from the federal government; and in most states, this is more readily given than General Assistance, three quarters of which comes from the locality and the state. A federal AFDC program does exist under which an intact family may receive support for a short time if both parents are unemployed, but in May 1968 only 68,000 families were receiving benefits under it. Usually, federal money is available only to fatherless families. If the arrangement encourages fathers to desert their families, it also encourages mothers to kick out fathers or to make life so miserable for them that they will leave. By the same token it

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removes any material incentive for a pregnant girl to marry the man who made her so.

Two rather striking facts support the hypothesis that the welfare system causes the breakup of families rather than the other way around. One is that in a sample of welfare mothers in New York City, nearly 60 per cent of those who were separated or divorced were separated or divorced *after* they went on welfare. The other is that the number of female-headed families in the cities increased by 660,000 from 1960 to 1968. The rate of increase was greatest among those most eligible for welfare—low-income Negroes. Nearly two thirds of all children in urban Negro families having incomes of less than $4,000 are now without fathers. I have no doubt that welfare is responsible for a great deal of this.

The breakup of families is, in and of itself, another contributing cause of the increase in caseload. An intact family normally receives welfare only during periods of unemployment, which is to say only now and then, but a broken one is likely to receive it continuously until the youngest child has grown up. The main damage, however, is not to the purse of the taxpayer but to the happiness and well-being of children who are left fatherless. Although the absence of the father is apparently nowhere near as injurious to the psychological health of children as the Moynihan Report claimed, and there is little doubt that a child may be better off without a father than with one who is abusive,[2] the breakup of families must certainly be counted as a heavy cost against the welfare system.

The cop-outs

2. The system enables a great many people who should work to escape work. I am not referring to mothers with dependent children —in my opinion most of them ought not to work. I am referring to the men who should be supporting those women and children but who are not because welfare relieves them of the necessity. There must be hundreds of thousands of these men. Some probably work about as much as they would if their families did not receive welfare; the difference is that they spend their earnings on themselves alone. (I conjecture that a considerable part of this spending is for illicit goods and services and therefore constitutes an inducement to others to engage in criminal activities.) Most, however, probably work less, only enough to live according to the standards of a street-corner society. If I am right about this, their partial withdrawal from the labor force represents a real cost to society, not merely a transfer of wealth from one group to another. It is obviously unjust

[2] L. J. Yarrow, "Separation from Parents During Early Childhood," in M. L. and L. W. Hoffman, eds., *Review of Child Development Research* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964) Vol. 1.

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to tax those who work for the support of those who won't. Moreover, I believe that voluntary unemployment is often just as demoralizing as involuntary. I am not speaking here of people who have learned the uses of leisure (such people are few, even among the rich); for most people, especially those who live in the present, work is the only available relief from boredom and the only source of discipline.

Keeping them down in the city

3. The welfare system deters people from moving to places where their opportunities will be better and where the costs of supporting them will be less. The idea seems to be gaining currency that no one should ever be expected to go somewhere in search of a job, no matter how little need there may be for his services where he is or how much need there may be for them elsewhere; instead, a job should be provided where the individual is, whatever the locational disadvantages may be, or else he and his family should be supported on welfare there indefinitely. In the case of the unemployable poor, it is taken for granted that they should be supported in whatever place they choose, no matter what the disadvantages of this to others may be. The tendency of welfare is therefore to maintain a concentration of the poor in the centers of the largest cities. The existence of huge ethnic or racial enclaves of the poor in the inner city at a time when economic growth is mostly in the suburban fringe is manifestly undesirable. When you stop to think about it, could anything be more absurd than to keep the unemployed and unemployable in those places where their long-run opportunities are poorest, and space is in greatest demand, shortest supply, and therefore highest in price?

Cheating

4. The welfare system offers an incentive to wholesale lying and cheating. No one really has any idea how many "fiscal abandonments" there are, and it is difficult to see how anyone could ever find out even by a major research project. If a mother wishes to claim more dependent children than she actually has, it is all but impossible to detect the fraud without the kind of prying that social workers are no longer supposed to do.

The example of the income tax is often cited as justification for a "declaration" procedure under which an applicant's statements are checked only if "circumstances in the particular case would indicate to a prudent person that further inquiry should be made." (The quotation is from the Wisconsin welfare statute.) After all, if we assume that income tax payers generally tell the truth, why should

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we not also assume that applicants for welfare do too? The answer is, first, that statistically speaking the poor are much more likely than the nonpoor to have what has been called a preconventional morality—one that says in effect that any action is "right" that serves your purpose and that you can get away with, and, second, the poor have little or nothing to lose if they are caught violating the law—parents who arrange a "fiscal" separation know perfectly well that the welfare department is not going to have them sent to jail if it finds out about it. What exactly can it do? It cannot even deprive them of support; people cannot be allowed to starve no matter what they do.

What of it if the poor do cheat on their "declarations"? Payment levels are too low anyway, it will be said, and so the cheating only results in their "taking" what they should get as a matter of right. I do not find this argument persuasive. For one thing, payment levels in the heavy caseload states are not so terribly low. But the main objection to a system that encourages cheating is that it tends to destroy honesty and fair dealing in all relations of life and thus also to reinforce the already pervasive cynicism of the "underclass" toward the institutions of government and toward authority of any kind.

The impasse

What sort of a welfare system would eliminate these undesirable side effects, or reduce them to tolerable limits, and yet afford generous support to all who are by some reasonable definition poor? I believe the answer is: none—not even the much talked about negative income tax.

It would be a simple matter to extend the AFDC program to intact families, including those in which both parents are employed. This would eliminate the incentive to "fiscal abandonment" to be sure. But the husband could still desert his family secure in the knowledge that it would be well provided for, and the wife could still kick him out secure in the same knowledge. No doubt many middle class husbands would leave or be kicked out if this would not create a financial problem for the family; in the lower class the pattern of husband-wife relations makes this even more likely. In the Negro lower class, Rainwater says, if the wife works she and her husband treat their earnings not as "family" income but as "yours" and "mine."[3] Presumably when a family is on welfare the husband's earnings are "his" and he accordingly leaves the support of the family largely or entirely to welfare. If this is indeed what he does, his wife has no material incentive to let him remain. (When

[3] Writing in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark, eds., *The Negro American* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 178.

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a husband fails to provide, Rainwater says, "the wife increasingly refuses to perform her usual duties for him." Kicking him out is the eventual outcome that is logically implied by this.) In the white lower class the pattern is probably much the same.

A welfare system can be designed to make those on welfare who work benefit more than those who do not. The incentives that such a system would offer, when piled on top of a decent minimum, might make the system enormously expensive. But let's ignore the cost. The fact remains that, even with incentives, anyone who prefers a minimum income without work to a higher one with work can still escape work, and unless the minimum is set very low—below what most of us would consider a decent level—it is likely that many would choose not to work. Moreover, the number who will choose not to work is likely to be vastly greater in the next generation than in this one, for it must be remembered that new tastes and habits will over the long run be formed in response to the incentives and opportunities that the new situation provides. The more ample and dependable the provision that society makes for the individual's future, the more encouragement it gives him to live only for the present.

Establishing equal standards in all states—and the standards would presumably be closer to New York's than to Mississippi's—would, to be sure, eliminate any incentive to go from Mississippi to New York for the purpose of getting on welfare. It would not, however, cause any movement out of the cities or from places of relatively poor to relatively good opportunity. In order to induce people to leave the city it would be necessary to reestablish inequality of payment levels with higher payments going to persons who did *not* live in big cities. It is of course hard to imagine this as a practical possibility: so long as most of the money comes from the federal government, New York will not stand for its poor receiving less than the poor of some other place, and Los Angeles and every other city will have the same attitude.

Cheating could be made difficult by returning to old fashioned methods involving frequent inquiry by case workers. But this would make the process of getting welfare so embarrassing, time-consuming, and uncertain that many who genuinely need help would be deterred from applying for it.

I am not claiming that any step in the direction of liberalizing our welfare system will entail significant amounts of these social costs. I doubt, for example, if tripling the average AFDC payment in Mississippi would cause the breakup of many families. Even if it would, I would favor the increase because it seems obvious to me that intended benefits in terms of the relief of suffering would more than offset such unintended costs. The practical question is, however, how far can we go in raising benefit levels before the un-

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intended costs become unacceptably high? I am afraid, the answer is not as far as one might think and certainly not as far as most of us would wish. The costs that I have been discussing tend to rise at an increasing rate as a welfare system is liberalized, whereas the additional benefits tend to decrease. Imagine the effect of tripling the average AFDC payment not in Mississippi but in New York. An increase like that would not greatly reduce suffering because the payment level in New York is already high enough to prevent extreme suffering. On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of people would probably take some of the socially undesirable steps that I have listed if an average family on welfare were assured a monthly income of $1,000 rather than $300.

Swamping the system

These considerations are sufficient to justify the conclusion that benefit levels ought not to be allowed to rise as high as generosity, or guilt, might prompt. Another consideration tends almost as strongly in the same direction. A high benefit level will tend to swamp the system by increasing the demand for welfare. Those who decide about the funding of a system naturally base their decisions on estimates of the number of persons who will be eligible and will apply for benefits under its terms. Characteristically they underestimate these numbers seriously. They fail to realize that the substantial increase of benefits may induce many people to take steps —often simple ones that do not constitute "chiseling" by any stretch of the imagination (e.g., ceasing to work overtime)—to reduce their incomes enough to make themselves eligible. They tend to assume that the percentage of eligibles actually applying will be no greater in the future than in the past. As a result of these errors, the demand for welfare frequently exceeds the amount of funds available to meet it and a "crisis" exists. Obviously the "crisis" could eventually be met by increasing appropriations *if* benefit levels were not allowed to rise further. In practice, however, they are allowed to rise, perhaps at an even faster rate than appropriations, and so the "crisis" grows. Eventually, of course, the taxpayer will put his foot down, for there must be some limit to the number of persons he is willing to support, or that he *can* support. When he does put it down, the number of persons eligible and applying for benefits will still exceed the available funds but it will no longer be possible to increase appropriations (the taxpayer having finally concluded that generosity to the poor only increases their numbers) and a real crisis—the swamping of the system—will have occurred.

I conclude that *no* welfare system can be satisfactory. A system that provides a high level of support for all who are by some reasonable definition poor will *ipso facto* offer powerful incentives that will

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induce a great many people to become (or pretend to become) poor in order to qualify for benefits and will in the process give rise to intolerable side effects of the kinds that I have mentioned. On the other hand, a system that does *not* offer incentives powerful enough to produce these effects will *ipso facto* not provide generously, or even adequately, for the poor. There is no way out of this bind. One must make a choice among evils.

Two lesser evils

Two possibilities, each with some claim to being the least among evils, recommend themselves. One is to replace all assistance programs with a negative income tax. The other is to make *everyone,* whether employed or not, whose income is below standard, eligible for the equivalent of AFDC. Either arrangement would much reduce the incentive now being given to break up families, and either would give the welfare recipient some incentives to increase his income by working.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the NIT is that it would not require a horde of social workers to operate it. This would not be all net gain, however, for the Internal Revenue Bureau would probably have to employ a great many social workers under another name in order to keep cheating within tolerable limits. Moreover, on certain assumptions a welfare bureaucracy may be a good thing. In bringing knowledge about the special circumstances of particular cases to bear upon decisions as to which of the poor are to receive assistance, it could perform an invaluable function. By distinguishing the technically poor—that is, those eligible only because they have taken steps to become so—from the really poor such a bureaucracy could check the production of side effects of the sorts that I listed above. And, by keeping the effective demand for benefits within manageable bounds, it could also make feasible higher payment levels than could otherwise be allowed without swamping the system.[4] By contrast, the NIT being almost automatic in its opera-

[4] I am told that welfare bureaucracies willing to perform the function that I have in mind simply do not exist any more; most social workers, it is said, believe that their mission is to give as much as possible to as many as possible. Perhaps this is so, but I am not entirely convinced. I suspect that in general and within limits social workers do what is expected of them and that local welfare administrators have ways of checking indiscriminate generosity. The fact that only a few thousand of the many thousands of families eligible under New York City's generous income-supplement program have actually received assistance under it strikes me as evidence that welfare administrators can control their social workers when they really try. They have tried in New York because the income supplement program is supported by the city and the state rather than by the federal government, and there is now taypayer resistance in both the city and state. Given the natural indignation of a taxpayer making $7,000 a year at the sight of his neighbor getting a nearly equal amount from welfare, this trend is bound to become more powerful. Therefore I do not entirely despair of improving matters

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tion, could not distinguish between the technically poor and the really poor and would therefore, if grave injury to the society were to be avoided, have to have rates so low as to be deemed seriously inadequate by many well-meaning people who have not fully considered the costs and benefits involved.

There would be no "welfare crisis" if welfare were regarded as still being for the purpose for which it was originally intended—helping those poor people who, because of unemployment or other causes beyond their control, are *temporarily* in need. Instead, welfare has gradually come to be regarded as a means of bringing about a more nearly equal distribution of income. The question has to be faced whether it is a fit instrument for its purpose. There are, of course, numerous other ways of redistributing income, and a rational policy would use them in combination. The experience of recent years demonstrates welfare cannot *in and of itself* constitute a satisfactory answer to the problem of income redistribution.

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by using welfare bureaucracies to help strike a balance between the supply of assistance and the demand for it.

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Beyond income maintenance— a note on welfare in New York City

NATHAN GLAZER

IN NEW YORK, we are in the position of having glimpsed the future, and of being able to report that it doesn't work. While the rest of the country and the federal government struggle to replace what is broadly felt to be an outmoded welfare system with some new system of income maintenance (Family Allowance? Negative Income Tax? Extension of Social Security?, etc.), New York City uniquely knows, at least to some extent, what a system of income maintenance would look like. For, by now, its welfare system has been in large measure transformed into an income maintenance system. And what it demonstrates is that there are problems in moving from welfare to income maintenance that we have not yet dreamed of.

While it will undoubtedly seem to many a ridiculous extravagance to argue that we have replaced welfare—that is, all those things that were supposed to be *wrong* with welfare—with income maintenance in New York City, it can be argued. I plan to do so and then to take up the question of why we are nevertheless not happy with the result.

Let us consider first the presumably negative effects of welfare, and see how, in recent years, they have been overcome. They are not presented in order of significance, but anyone who has been concerned with discussions of welfare will recognize that all of them are arguments that have been insistently raised against the justice, wisdom, effectiveness, or value of the older welfare system.

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Poverty

One of the chief arguments against welfare is that it maintains people at the level of poverty or below. This argument speaks to the main function of welfare—that is, the relief of distress. Now, in New York City for some time it has been hard to argue that welfare levels are below poverty levels, or below the levels achieved by large numbers of working families not on welfare. The evidence in the preceding articles by David Gordon and Edward Banfield is clear on this point: for the past few years at least, welfare payments have been competitive with (in many cases superior to) the wages that relatively unskilled and low-paid workers can get in the job market. Indeed, Gordon's principal argument for the incredible rise in the numbers on welfare in New York is that the increase in the real value of welfare grants has multiplied the number of those eligible (not necessarily in the sense that they are destitute or totally without alternatives, which is the kind of distress welfare was initially designed to relieve), in the sense that their returns from paid work will not yield them as much as welfare grants and the associated benefits (chiefly free medical and dental care).

Elizabeth Durbin has estimated that, while the average manufacture wage rose 19 per cent between 1962 and 1967, and weekly earnings in New York State at the minimum wage (for 40 hours) rose 30 per cent, the budget allowance for a welfare family of four in New York City rose 45 per cent. Thus, one negative aspect of welfare is overcome in New York City—it does give enough money.

Incentives

A second criticism of welfare has been that it destroys the incentive to work and thereby get off welfare. One argument is based on the so-called 100 per cent tax on earnings (i.e., anything that a person on welfare earns is deducted from the welfare grants except for a small amount that is given back for expenses involved in working). In New York City, as in some other enlightened welfare jurisdictions, the administrators have for a long time been concerned with this problem. They have set up experiments that permit a welfare client to work and retain some part of his earnings. Thus, children's earnings are, in various ways, not reckoned into family income. This forms an incentive to work though perhaps, as yet, an inadequate incentive. The problem of locating a proper cut-off point at which, after sufficient earnings, one is totally *off* welfare is a difficult one. After all, in New York welfare that is supplemented by earnings quickly brings the welfare client not only to the level of large numbers of working families but even beyond them; and thus raises a

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serious question of equity. In any case, the 100 per cent tax on earnings no longer operates in New York City and it is being replaced in advanced jurisdictions in other parts of the country.

The man in the house

Another part of the argument that welfare destroys the incentive to work is based on the results of the fact that under the categorical welfare system set up under the Social Security Act of the 1930's only certain categories are eligible for federally reimbursed welfare, and employable persons are not eligible. Therefore, the employable father leaves home in order to make his wife and children eligible for Aid to Dependent Children. True, those who are employable but nevertheless destitute, might—depending on the generosity of the local jurisdiction—get General Assistance (the descendant of the old almshouse local relief); but this is generally far less than they could get from the programs that receive some federal reimbursement. Furthermore, General Assistance has traditionally been administered with even less concern for the dignity and rights of the client than the categorical programs. Any general description will hardly communicate the enormous variety of welfare practices in the endless number of jurisdictions; but the inability of a man to get supplementary relief if his income is inadequate to maintain his family certainly has formed a serious disincentive to continue working. It also provided an incentive for him to leave his family in order to make them eligible.

But these incentives and disincentives have never played a major role in New York City because Home Relief, the city's form of General Assistance, has distributed funds on the same basis as the categorical programs. The definition of need is the same; the definition of minimum necessary budgets is the same. Thus, for many years it has been possible for a man to earn as much as he can, and yet to receive supplementary aid from welfare if his income cannot meet the minimum budgetary needs, defined by welfare, of his family.

Broken homes

The single most powerful argument against welfare is that it contributes to the breakup of families. If the pattern we have described as typical does in fact prevail in most welfare jurisdictions, there unquestionably is an incentive for the unemployed man to desert his wife and children so that they can get onto the more generous (because federally-reimbursed) Aid to Dependent Children program. But in New York City an unemployed man was always eligible for Home Relief. In addition, since 1961 it has been possible for any state to join the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Unem-

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ployed program (AFDC-U, which is called Temporary Aid to Dependent Children in New York City), which provides aid for a family even if it includes unemployed employables who have either exhausted unemployment insurance or never had any. In other words, under this program the deserting father gets *no more* for his family by deserting. Indeed, because he is counted into the welfare grant at the outset, there is a sense in which he gets *more* by staying. This has been true for many years in New York City.

Recently, Lawrence Podell's studies demonstrated that a good number of welfare families lost their husbands and fathers *after* they got onto welfare. This piece of data finally disposed of the argument, that, in any case, could hardly be maintained after examining the regulations, that welfare families had to break up. Here the issue of "the man in the house," that led to the notorious midnight searches, was not related to the fact that, if he were found, the family would go *off* welfare, but rather to the fact that, if he were found and were working, then he could be asked to—indeed would have to, if he were husband or father—contribute to the support of his children.

Recognition of this situation has now led to a new form of the "welfare-breaks-up-families" argument, applicable to such liberal jurisdictions as New York. This form claims that, in effect, welfare, by requiring working husbands and fathers to report their income, drives them *away* from their families. A man would be willing enough to stay, the argument goes, if he did not have to contribute to the support of his wife and their children—or to the woman he is living with and her children. It is further argued that this problem could be accommodated by various income maintenance proposals. Thus, a Family Allowance would give the family money without regard to the father's earnings, and a Negative Income Tax would automatically give a benefit for children, just as the present day income tax does.

These arguments are not entirely without substance; but at the same time one must recognize that there is no real solution to this problem. A Family Allowance would not in any way match the full needs of a poor family, nor would the Negative Income Tax.[1] Some form of welfare supplement for those who are still needy under these systems would be required. And this supplement would once again raise the old questions: do we have a family here or don't we? Is he a lodger, a lover, a boyfriend, a friend, a date, etc.? These determinations are made today, and would have to be made in the future, in order to reckon the degree of need. There is no way of eliminating this step in estimating need, unless we are to agree that there are two kinds of families—those in which the husband-father's

[1] Any Family Allowance or Negative Income Tax that would meet these needs would also be very expensive, and create an entirely new and more complex social problem—i.e., the working poor, who would in effect be working for nothing.

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earnings are his own, and need not provide for the needs of wife, mother and children, and those in which all resources are drawn upon by all of its members. In view of the inequities this would produce—families of the first type would get far more than families of the second type—one does not see how such a distinction could be incorporated into public law. Indeed, it would go counter to all common law, which recognizes the responsibility of men to support wives and children, and to some extent to support common law wives and children. It has been argued that welfare, because of its regulations, sets up a different system of family law for the poor than for the nonpoor (this was the brilliantly argued thesis of the late Jacobus Ten Broek, who pointed out that relative responsibility was more broadly defined in welfare law than in common law); but some of those who now argue that welfare breaks up families would now want to move in the *other* direction, and ascribe *less* responsibility for those who seek public aid than for those who do not. It is hardly likely that this will happen.

Finally, there is another variation of the "welfare-breaks-up-families" argument. If the husband slips around the corner, and rents a room, his wife can then receive welfare while he gets a job—and they can have two incomes instead of one. Elizabeth Durbin, in the course of an economic analysis of welfare, seems to suggest this may be the most rational decision—using "rational," of course, only in the economic sense of maximizing income. However, this doesn't seem a serious form of the argument because this kind of fraud can be engaged in by anyone without going to the trouble of breaking up the family. Anyone can conceal resources and income if he is so inclined, and then go on welfare. True, there is a moderate danger of being discovered if the working man does not leave home—a study by Richard Pomeroy reports that 85 per cent of New York City families on welfare get at least three home visits in a year, and 27 per cent report six or more. But whether or not this is an inducement to leave home depends on the real danger of apprehension—and here, difficult as it is to make any definitive statement, I would argue that the present style of administration of welfare fits an income maintenance system, where the benefit is defined more as a "right" and less as a "privilege." I doubt that very many of today's welfare workers rummage in the closet to see if a man's clothes are there. We have some evidence that this kind of thing must be becoming less and less common.

The welfare stigma

One of the chief arguments against welfare, and for its replacement by some system of income maintenance, is that welfare involves a stigma and a degradation. It is not like getting an income

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tax refund, workmen's compensation, social security, or farm subsidy payments. There is something shameful and degrading about receiving welfare, and because of this it has bad effects on those who receive it. For one thing, it may be scorned by many who do need support to raise their families properly. For another, those who receive it may be denied equal treatment—for example, they may not be taken as tenants, or they may not get credit from stores. Finally, the effect of being stigmatized and degraded is to reduce the sense of self-confidence and personal worth, and as this declines the welfare recipient becomes, precisely because of welfare, more dependent and less responsible than he was before.

Perhaps nothing is as widely believed as this argument—and yet it is not easy to make sense of it. Moreover, if it does make sense—and in many parts of the country it may—it can hardly make sense in New York City.

First of all, there is a real question whether the receipt of welfare does involve a sense of shame and degradation on the part of the recipient. Joel Handler, studying the reactions of welfare families in Wisconsin to the questions they were asked as to their resources, the whereabouts of the father, and the like, found that many of the recipients didn't even recall being questioned about these matters, and the great majority said they were not bothered at all about being asked such questions. They felt these were perfectly proper questions. The great majority of the Wisconsin recipients are not disturbed when the caseworker discusses their budget with them. They think the caseworker is "always" or "usually" fair.

Scott Briar conducted a study of welfare recipients under the AFDC-U program in California. If any group of welfare clients should object to questioning as being degrading, it is these—after all, many were workers who had run out of unemployment insurance benefits. But they did not. This comment was typical: "I think the welfare department is too soft, too lenient. They don't make investigations to see how the welfare money is being spent. If the workers went to the house more often, they would be able to tell if people were cheating. They could go to the home anytime they wanted to, day or night. If the person isn't guilty, then they shouldn't care when the worker comes."

Studies of this sort are scarcely conclusive as to the attitudes of welfare recipients to the process of getting onto welfare—and yet one suspects that the horror of various commentators at the eligibility checks is equivalent to the horror of middle class critics of low-cost public housing. Both have a point, but the recipients of the benefits complain less about them than the outside observers. Welfare clients see a certain legitimacy in the process of checking eligibility that critics of the system do not.

As we know, New York City is not Wisconsin, nor is it California.

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New Yorkers do not take quite so accepting a view of the welfare department, according to a study by Harold Yahr and Richard Pomeroy. One detects a point of view among New Yorkers on welfare that seems somewhat closer to that of the critic of welfare. The Puerto Ricans are least bothered by having their eligibility for welfare checked—three-quarters say they are bothered not at all, compared to 56 per cent of the Negroes and 43 per cent of the whites. But substantial minorities in all groups (30 per cent to 40 per cent) say the eligibility check "makes them feel ashamed," smaller groups feel insulted (from one-fifth of the Puerto Ricans to one-third of the Negroes), and two-fifths say it makes them feel the department doesn't trust them.

But in the case of New York, it can well be argued that whatever top leadership can do to reduce the stigma and the degradation, the administration of Mitchell Ginsberg, and of James Dumpson before him, has done. Both are professors of social work; both are passionately committed to the most enlightened and progressive view of welfare. New York City welfare has not been "punitive" as far back as anyone can remember. Undoubtedly this view at the top goes through various bottlenecks on its way to the bottom. But it is my impression—admittedly one that would have to be supplemented by studies of the attitudes and procedures of welfare workers—that by now a benign and positive attitude is prevalent among caseworkers, and perhaps more prevalent, than punitive attitudes. The straws in the wind that suggest this are, first, the strongly stated and well-known position of Administrator Mitchell Ginsberg, and Commissioner Jack Goldberg. They are professionals, they are compassionate, they do not view welfare as the niggardly charity and dole of a restrictive government but as a valued service and a necessary benefit, to be received as a right by those qualified. Their complaints are against the state and federal governments for failing to expand their share of the burden, not against the clients and recipients for rapidly increasing in numbers. Secondly, one may note that the attitudes of the social service workers union have always been progressive and not restrictive. Third, one may note that there has been a substantial change in the outlook and attitudes of welfare workers. Because of the enormous turnover—a few years ago 40 per cent a year, now 24 per cent—a substantial number of caseworkers in New York City are always young college graduates. The attitudes of the young, as we know, have become more generous over time, and by now many think it their function to dispense as much money as possible with as little restriction as possible—and this attitude is not discouraged by the top administration. Finally, the Welfare Rights Organization has played an important role in New York, and it has certainly served to make welfare benefits legitimate in the eyes of the recipients, so that they see them as rights to

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be seized and expanded in an aggressive fashion, rather than privileges to be accepted humbly. I would guess that the more critical attitudes toward welfare by recipients one detects in the studies in New York City are themselves reflections and echoes of the more liberal attitudes of top administration and lower level workers, as well as of the ideology of the Welfare Rights Organization.

We also have some tangible evidence that welfare in New York City is today dispensed in a more generous manner. Elizabeth Durbin has studied the changing reasons for the closing of cases. The reason that she suggests as an index of the severity of administration is, "refusal to comply with departmental policy." Miss Durbin writes, "This category runs the gamut from refusal to seek or accept employment, to misuse of funds and refusal to pursue persons responsible for supporting the family, to the case of actually finding a man present who is supposed to have deserted." The following table shows the decline of this reason as a cause for closing cases:

TABLE 1. *Percentage refusing to comply with departmental policy, as a cause for closing*

	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
ADC	25.9	21.5	18.1	17.2	14.0	13.9	12.7	8.8	5.0
TADC			15.6	19.0	13.2	13.5	11.9	12.1	7.5
Home relief		14.6	9.4	9.2	8.7	8.2	8.0	7.9	6.1

The drop in 1967 in the frequency of this cause for closing—as the Welfare Rights Movement grew and as the numbers on welfare exploded—is particularly striking.

Thus it can scarcely be argued that, in New York City, welfare imposes a "means test" and a stigma through the operations of the welfare department itself. First, the ordinary eligibility checks of welfare departments are generally seen as legitimate. Second, insofar as they are seen as *less* legitimate in New York City than elsewhere, this has been owing, not to the stringency of administration, but more likely to a *decreasing* stringency of administration, and probably reflects a growing agreement among top administration, new welfare workers, and welfare recipients organizations that any hint of obligation on the part of recipients for receiving welfare should be eliminated.

Declarations and flat grants

In the same direction, and serving to implant the same attitudes toward welfare on the part of recipients, is the growing use in New York of the "declaration"—now in use in three welfare centers, and scheduled to expand—to replace the more elaborate "intake inter-

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view and investigation" as a means of receiving welfare. The declaration that enables the client to receive support just as one receives an income tax refund, has always been viewed as one of the major steps in the shift from a welfare system to an income maintenance system. This is already on the way in New York City.

Similarly, it has been seen as the objective of an income maintenance system, as against a welfare system, to simplify the confusing and impossibly difficult and complex calculation of budgets and grants. Thus, under the welfare system a budget is determined for the family—so much for food for each child of such an age and such a sex, so much for clothing, so much for incidentals, carfare, costs of visits to the doctor; if there is a new baby so many bottles, nipples, diapers, etc. It is true that once the budget is calculated, it is given in one lump sum and there is no one to check whether it was spent in the way the welfare department calculated. Still, it can be considered degrading to have to be allotted money in this way. In addition, the procedure is so complex, with so many variables, that how much you get depends on the welfare worker. And the means of its calculation also leads to constant changes in the grant, as a child gets older, or leaves school, or has to convalesce, etc.

But as a matter of fact New York City is now moving toward flat grants, as best it can within the limits of federal and state regulations, because the administrators would prefer it. The irony of this movement toward flat grants is that as we get close to it, the attitudes of critics of the welfare system to it is likely to change. They once considered it a desirable objective, which would reduce the arbitrary power of the welfare worker and simplify the system so that the welfare recipient could understand it better and feel less helpless and dependent. Yet New York City's one major move to flat grants has led to outraged protest by the newer critics of welfare! The fact is that the old system of special grants, if one knew how to "play" it, opened the way to an enormous flood of additional benefits —for furniture, clothing, etc. The Welfare Rights Organization organized recipients to demand these additional sums; they distributed lists that clients could check and hand in to their case workers; the number of special grants grew rapidly. When the welfare department finally moved to replace the endless number of special grants with flat grants, this cut off the most successful organizing tool of the Welfare Rights Organization. Hence the outraged protest by the WRO and its supporters.

The stain that won't come off

Which brings us back to our main theme—what would income maintenance do to remove the stigma of degradation that welfare does not? It would divide the sums that poor and needy people got

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into two parts. One part would have a greater color of right (Family Allowance, Negative Income Tax). But this part would undoubtedly be fairly small in New York City—that is, if the system was designed for the whole country, in which New York's welfare benefits stand near the top. There would then be a second part. And this part would again—just as welfare is now—have to be determined on the basis of need. And how could it be determined except through an eligibility check? Undoubtedly, as lawyers have pointed out, legitimate as it is to protect public funds, excessive suspicion opens the way to a multitude of abuses. Thus, the fact that a welfare department has a right to check on fraud should not give it the right to conduct searches without search warrants, or tap telephones, etc. Still, this will be government money, and depending on the politics of the local community, and the character of its political leadership, it will be checked, whether it be more or less harshly or mildly. In recent years in New York, under mayors such as Wagner and Lindsay, and under liberal leadership, these checks have not been anywhere as near as harsh as elsewhere. If they become harsher, it will not be because we have either welfare or income maintenance or both—it will be because the electorate has become suspicious and resentful of those receiving public money for need.

The problem of the stigma of welfare is not easily eliminated by a change of system. It is not the name of welfare that people consider a stigma; it is the nature of the recipients, and the concrete and symbolic justifications of the actual money transfer involved in the process of income maintenance. Thus, when ADC was a means to support white widows—ideally, as Daniel P. Moynihan has suggested, the white Protestant survivors of miners killed in a West Virginia disaster before social security came into play—there was no degradation attached to it. When it is used, as it increasingly is, to support Negro women whose husbands did not die in mine disasters before they could get onto social security, attitudes will change. In New York City, ADC is now 50 per cent Negro and 40 per cent Puerto Rican. The attitudes of whites—the majority in the city, and the great majority in the electorate—to ADC certainly differ from those they had when ADC primarily benefitted whites. Conceivably, the WRO will remove any sense of shame from the minds of recipients—but the stigma will be imposed and the shame imputed by those whom WRO will not reach. It is hard to see how this reality can change. And if there are such strikingly different views on welfare between those who receive it and those who pay for it, it will require the most subtle social engineering to bring the two together.

There is a second part to this complex matter of changing the image of welfare by shifting to income maintenance. For this image does not depend only on welfare's name. It depends on its reality—that it is not an insurance system, such as social security or Medi-

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care; it is not a reward for service to the state, such as veterans' benefits; it is not an exchange for not using property, like farmer's subsidies; it is not a system of investment for getting a more valuable work force, such as work training and youth training programs; nor is it seen as public insurance against a disaster that can strike anyone and ruin anyone, as I believe a universal system of health insurance would be. In other words, welfare's closest analogue is charity, and that image is not easily to be gotten rid of. The British government has insisted for 25 years that there is no public charity in England, that there are only comprehensive schemes of welfare to cover the entire population. Yet when all the schemes based on insurance fail, and they do for many people who have special problems and undergo special hardships, there must be a residual scheme, and in the great edifice of social insurance that was set up in England after World War II, this became "National Assistance." Despite its rather decent name (not very different from our "Public Assistance"), it never outgrew the discredit of being a descendant of the Poor Law. A few years ago the name was changed to the more neutral "Supplementary Benefits." It would be worthwhile to see what people in England think of Supplementary Benefits, whether they feel there is any stigma in applying for them, how the recipients feel, and how others feel. I suspect the change of name has not made all that much difference.

The real ingenuity of Family Allowances and Negative Income Tax is that, instead of simply trying to attach a neutral affect to the distribution of income to the poor, they try to attach to it a positive affect—the support of children, the virtuous note of "income," etc. Such plans can go a good part of the way toward reducing the negative attitude toward welfare, with whatever ill effects follow from it; but there will always be need for a residual scheme. And when one considers the modest sums now suggested as beginning figures for Family Allowances and a Negative Income Tax, and when one further considers that average grants per capita on welfare in New York City amount to about $1,100 per person per year, not counting substantial sums for medical assistance, one sees a long future ahead for a very substantial welfare department in New York City.

Money or services?

One of the chief charges against the welfare system is that it imposes on people services they do not want and don't need. What the poor need is money, money, money. At one time, welfare did emphasize giving money. But increasingly, and particularly since the triumph of the professional social work point of view in the 1962 amendments to the Social Security Act, it has emphasized services, "rehabilitation." These would take the form of advice on children,

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or referral to agencies that provide services for children; advice on relations with one's husband or other men; advice on budgeting and home management; advice on getting trained for work or getting work; and so on. The critic of welfare will argue that the welfare client comes to the welfare department because he (she) is destitute and needs money: instead the welfare department worker will insist (according to law, she must) that the client also needs "service," nonmonetary aid, and tries to provide it. In doing so, the welfare worker insists on an exchange in which, in order to get the money, the client must show readiness to take advice concerning children, marriage, money-management, work-seeking, etc., and perhaps must even show humility, contrition and willingness to accept the welfare worker's "professional" advice (what the critic and the welfare client may well see as middle class meddling). The shift to an income maintenance system, divorced from the provision of service, will put the client in the same position as any middle class person who earns income from a job—if he wants advice about children, marriage, job, etc., he'll seek it from a professional, but no one requires him to accept it as a condition of gaining his income.

This criticism has much merit in it. Any reasonable person will agree that the welfare client should be freed from troublesome meddling and needless compulsion. Of course, one should not expect the divorce of income maintenance from services to be accompanied by any *decline* in the numbers of welfare. In fact, insofar as people shun welfare because they don't like the welfare worker showing up in the house and giving them advice, it may *increase* the numbers on welfare. But it is also true that, so long as only money is involved, welfare becomes a "cleaner"—if you will, more businesslike—arrangement.

One part of the criticism of services connected with welfare is that social workers don't really know which services are useful. Thus, various studies of the effectiveness of casework in reducing the dependency of the multi-problem family, or curbing juvenile delinquency, have concluded sadly that social casework does not do any such thing. (For example, see Gordon E. Brown, *The Multi-Problem Dilemma: A Social Research Demonstration with Multi-Problem Families,* and H. J. Meyer, *Girls at Vocational High*). Another part of the criticism of services is that very often the service requires a resource that the welfare department cannot really provide —thus, if finding an apartment is a necessary "service," as it so often is, the welfare department is as helpless as most people in New York City, and will often have to put up clients in hotels. If the service is referral to a psychotherapist, there may be an endless waiting list.

These criticisms are valid enough but—as we can now say with some assurance from the studies of Joel Handler and Richard Pom-

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eroy (the latter of New York City clients specifically)—they are also not as weighty as they appear at first glance. Very little service is actually provided. The welfare worker is busy checking eligibility and rechecking budgets and providing special grants—too busy to provide the "service" and "rehabilitation" that are the duties of the local welfare departments, according to the 1962 amendments.

Secondly, if social casework has been shown to be of no help in helping the multi-problem family, we need not be too concerned—because the welfare worker doesn't and can't provide social casework anyway. Whatever his title, he rarely has training of any kind in social casework—he's an untrained person right out of college. (His supervisor *may* have such training.) As a result, the services provided by the "social workers," most of whom are simply welfare workers, are likely to consist of such very concrete help as getting more money or telling how to get medical care (both of which are appreciated), and rather general and unprofessional conversation on such matters as the importance of seeing to it that the children go to school (which can be ignored).

Third, there is little evidence as to whether most clients feel coerced into taking services (which, as we have pointed out, are in any case not provided in volume) as the price for income maintenance. In Wisconsin, relatively few do. In New York, in view of the greater militancy of welfare clients and organizations, it is hard to believe that the clients feel under any greater pressure to follow advice. In addition, in view of the change in the character of welfare workers in New York (from middle class to more liberal and even militant), it is hardly likely that there is a greater tendency to proffer this kind of unprofessional advice or to require that it be taken.

One of the problems in studying this subject is that it is hard to draw the line between advice which the client sees herself as *bound* to take to keep on welfare, *wise* to take because it keeps her in the good graces of the welfare worker, *good* to take because it is good advice, etc. The distinction between these different attitudes to advice is probably hard to make in the minds of many clients. Certainly we do not want to press the welfare client into taking advice which is simply ethnocentric, middle class, unrelated to her situation, and not likely to improve her sense of herself, or her relations with her children and her husband (in part because we don't know what *would* improve these). But at the same time there may be drawbacks, as the studies have suggested, to the full divorce of income maintenance and services. The income maintenance and health care functions are the ones that the welfare client sees most positively; a good relationship is established with the worker because she does provide money and does arrange for health care. On this basis, the welfare worker is in a position to have some positive influence on the client. Perhaps he can make useful suggestions on

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general health care, home management, getting help for a problem with the children, or getting a job. And even though the welfare worker himself is young and inexperienced, the welfare department will have professional personnel in these fields who may be helpful.

This sounds horribly patronizing to the poor. But the real question we must answer, when we consider this point of whether services should be attached to income maintenance, is whether the poor need *only* money? They certainly need money; but the rest of this hard question must be asked and is not to be blinked away: do the 900,000 mothers and children and employable men on welfare in New York City reflect only the need for money—or do they reflect, in some degree, various kinds of problems for which advice and services may conceivably be useful? And if so, is it wise to completely divorce the two functions? In the case of unemployment insurance, we have considered it sensible to combine the dispensing of money with the function of seeking employment for the unemployed, though we combine these two functions very poorly. And if any scheme of income maintenance must include money I and money II—that is, the money dispensed under a new national scheme, plus the additional money that will be dispensed through the welfare mechanism locally (whatever it is called) on the basis of additional need—would it not be reasonable to combine the *second* kind of financial aid (the kind that is still needed even after a new national floor has been established) with some system of services? The need for financial aid is very often owing to causes that could be remedied through services. If the need for additional aid is caused by a man's inability to hold a job, it is possible some work-training program may help, and might be mandated; if it is caused by the fact that a man spends money on drugs, perhaps he can be required to take treatment; if it is caused by the fact that a mother seems to spend all her money buying things from door-to-door salesmen, perhaps she can be advised. These are, after all, some of the reasons the poor are poor and need money. Should the reasons be totally divorced from the needs, with the needs met by one agency, and the causes of distress handled by other agencies—if and when the family seeks aid or is required by law to get it? There *is* a rationale for combining services with financial support, and it would take someone very sure indeed that the poor need only money to deny that it makes some sense. That the poor need only money is a good slogan, but a bad analysis.

Welfare and jobs

The real question of welfare, and the question which the proposals for new systems of income maintenance cannot address, is why regular jobs in the economy do not, in and of themselves, "solve"

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the welfare problem. For a long time, social workers in public welfare agencies have argued this was not a real alternative—those on welfare, they pointed out, were in large measure children we did not expect to work, mothers taking care of them, the aged whose social security income was insufficient to maintain them or who were not eligible in the first place. How then could work and work-training affect the numbers on welfare? But this was always a disingenuous position. Admittedly, the numbers of employables on welfare are small; but the question is not that of the women and children on welfare, but of the men who had married those women and fathered those children and have since vanished. In New York City, with its substantial Home Relief and TADC program, one had to be concerned not only with the 178,000 mothers receiving aid to care for their children—and why the fathers of the children could provide no support for them—one also had to be concerned with 42,000 employables and with 25,000 employed persons receiving supplementation. (These are figures as of September 1968, presented by Commissioner Goldberg to the New York City Council last February.)

There is no easy answer to this question of why those on welfare cannot gain enough from the labor market, but in New York City, where there is no major problem of unemployment (at least if we define this as jobs available at the minimum wage), and where nevertheless a tenth of the population that is able-bodied or related to able-bodied employable males must resort to welfare, this must be a key aspect of any attempt to understand the welfare problem and the processes whereby those on welfare might be assisted to a more satisfying mode of life.

David Gordon's figures suggest that of all those eligible to go onto welfare in New York City (eligible from the point of view of income), less than three-fifths do. It would be critical to find out why two-fifths *do not* go on welfare. Do they have resources that don't show in income figures? Do they get support from relatives or friends? Do they decide to accept a lower standard of living than welfare provides? Do they have moral values which prevent them from going onto welfare? Are they members of communities that look down upon the welfare client and reject him?

It is also possible this is an incorrect statement of the case—that those not on welfare at any given time, but who earn little, will be on it soon or have been on it recently. It is also possible that those on welfare at any given time have worked in the past and will work in the future. This is certainly true of many on welfare; but whether the first possibility or the second has more merit, and how much each has, we do not know. What we do know is fragmentary and only partially revealing. We do, for instance, know that the welfare population is *also* a working population. Large numbers of those on welfare—even on ADC—come onto it be-

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cause a wage-earner has lost a job. Large numbers leave it because they have gotten a job. Elizabeth Durbin reports the proportions for 1967: 20 per cent of the admissions to ADC, 77 per cent to TADC, 14 per cent to Home Relief, entered for "layoff, discharge," or a related reason. Certainly many of the other reasons (illness, departure of a parent) must also be related to unemployment. Among the reasons for closing a case, obtaining employment looms even larger: 26 per cent for ADC clients, 64 per cent for TADC, 20 per cent for Home Relief. The large numbers leaving welfare who have moved or whose whereabouts are unknown (18 per cent on ADC, 11 per cent on TADC, 31 per cent on Home Relief) must also include a large number who have gotten jobs.

It is easy to forget, as we look at the climbing welfare figures, that welfare for most people is a revolving door. At the beginning of 1969, 30,000 cases were coming onto the case load every month, while 10,000 were leaving. Loss of jobs and gaining jobs played a major role in this movement. The revolving door is revealed in the fact that more than one-third of cases on ADC, Home Relief, and TADC are generally "reopened"—meaning they had been on that program before. It seems enormously difficult, from the studies I have seen, to calculate any "average" length of stay on welfare, but Elizabeth Durbin suggests average stays of between two and three years for ADC, and less than a year for Home Relief and TADC. Of course, many have been on welfare before.

I won't claim to have shed any light on this complex question of the relationship of welfare to the job market. The best we can say at this point is that, as welfare levels approximate what the unskilled can get from working, then we will have more coming onto welfare. Some of them will come onto welfare because they give up the search for work, others because they have exhausted their resources but expect to get back to work. Despite the federal requirements that people on welfare be aided to get work, and required to take appropriate work, little can be done to insist that people work. We know the result of efforts at such insistence in Newburgh, New York, or Alameda County, California. It's good for a headline, but it just doesn't seem to work. Compulsion needs the kind of state and law we don't have, fortunately. A substantial proportion of those registered have health problems, physical and mental, and often argue that they do even if the counsellors think they don't. The city's facilities for estimating the truth are scanty and overworked. Almost half don't show up for job interviews that are arranged. A study of the 63 placements of the Division of Employment and Rehabilitation in June, 1966, showed that 53 were not on the job a month later. Forty-eight had left in the first two weeks. The number of placements is in any case ridiculously small.

Many do not give up the search, but come on and go off welfare,

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with welfare and work alternately supplying support—why they work at one time and resort to welfare at the other, remains obscure. In New York City it hardly seems related to the overall state of the economy and the availability of jobs.

But to come back to the main issue—what will an income maintenance program do for this problem that welfare does not? Admittedly, welfare's articulation with this process of alternative work and welfare could be better. Elizabeth Durbin, on the basis of her insightful study, proposes it should be easier to get on welfare—since welfare is used when the job market fails to provide income, it should not be a lengthy and complicated process. And if people can get on easily, they will get off easily, knowing that they can always return. But certainly this is already happening in New York. The declaration system is almost as simple a way of getting on welfare as filling out an income tax return (and even that would be needed to get Negative Income Tax) or reporting the birth of a new child (and at least that would be necessary to get the Family Allowance). Durbin reports acceptance rates of 80 to 91 per cent for Home Relief, ADC, and TADC for 1967. The acceptance rates at the centers which use the declaration are higher.

Indeed, just as I have made an argument above that there seems some reason to combine income maintenance with varied social services, as is done under the present welfare system, so one could make a modest argument that it might make some sense to combine income maintenance with various programs of work-training and work-seeking, as is also attempted in the present welfare department. If work and welfare spell each other for the individual client as closely as the data suggest, then conceivably those responsible for providing income might be able to encourage clients to take up courses of training or approaches to job-seeking and job-holding that might be more rewarding than their previous practices. I do not press this argument—for I am not sure how effective our programs of work-training and assistance in job-seeking are for the low-income population. Yet if we are to think of some long-range approach beyond simple maintenance, we may well find, after we break up the connection between income maintenance and various services, that we will want to put them together again.

An advocate's dilemma

New York City thus presents a dilemma to the advocate—as I am—of the new programs of income maintenance now being proposed from all sides, and apparently being considered by various parts of the Administration. We can find arguments for these programs—and strong ones—throughout the nation. The strongest argument is that in large parts of the country the levels of support under wel-

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fare, even with Federal sharing formulas, are shockingly low, and most lead to squalor, malnutrition, ill-health, stunted growth, educational deficiency, and a level of misery which the richest nation in the world simply should not tolerate. A second strong argument is that in many parts of the country these programs are administered by punitive officials, who demoralize, degrade, and stigmatize the recipients. Federal standards now play some role in preventing this—a federal system of income maintenance would do more. A third reason is that the country would be benefited by a higher level of consumption on the part of the poor. A fourth is that a bewildering variety of individual programs for aiding the poor—programs which are difficult to administer and have other drawbacks—could be dispensed with if there were higher levels of income maintenance. For example, it would make food stamp programs unnecessary just as they are in New York City where the level of welfare makes them more bother than they are worth. A fifth reason is that it might play some role in reducing the migration from low-welfare areas to high-welfare areas. In any scheme one can imagine, New York City, to maintain its present standards, would have to supplement the federal program, and would still remain a relatively high-welfare area. But the gap would be less.

There are other virtues to income maintenance. It would shift some of the burden of welfare from the hard-pressed budgets of city and state to the federal government. (Of the current New York Department of Social Service budget of $1.347 billion, $532 million is borne by the federal government, $416 million by the state, and $399 million by the city.) Federal income maintenance would also mean that many now on welfare would have enough income to keep off it—it would reduce the number of clients of the welfare department. It might also make expenditures for the poor more politically acceptable by incorporating them into a system not designed solely for the poor—which would be the case with Family Allowances.

But what it would *not* do—by itself—is deal with the anomaly of hundreds of thousands of families broken by abandonment and incapable of finding support through the ordinary processes of the labor market. Indeed, depending on the details that accompany it, it might even expand the number of such families. Thus if the Family Allowance was given as of right to the *mother* of children, the power of women to dispense with their husbands—a power that ADC now gives them in New York City—would be expanded, and the low economic status of the men, which may play some role in family abandonment now, would be further reduced.

In New York and in other great cities we deal with a social disaster, and I see income maintenance as at best a very partial poultice—desirable, but one which does not get to the heart of

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the crisis. To my mind, *the heart of the crisis is a massive change in values which makes various kinds of work that used to support families undesirable to large numbers of potential workers today.* How to reform that, I don't know, since this change in values is itself the product of an affluent society

The principal virtue of income maintenance in New York is that it would take some pressure off city and state budgets. It would not reduce the welfare population. It would not reduce the cost of the welfare population. It would change some names and some budgetary mechanisms. For New York is an enlightened city, and has already gone far in transforming its system of welfare into a system of income maintenance. In doing so, it has ironically, created the largest population in any city in the world dependent on public funds for its existence. And no measures on the agenda of public discussion at present suggest that we can do anything else but live with this problem.

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NEWSREEL

A west side story: I

At I.S. 88, a Harlem intermediate school, students set off stink bombs several times a week, and false fire alarms are a daily occurrence.

In the same school, as many as two dozen students cut classes each day and roam through the corridors singing, banging on doors and hurling trash baskets into classrooms.

Narcotics pushers and plainclothes narcotics police, both dressed as students, roam the corridors of Brandeis High School on West 84th Street. A Brandeis student who reported a fellow pusher to authorities last week was beaten up and hospitalized briefly.

It is not unusual during holidays at Brandeis that a number of its students travel to nearby Joan of Arc Junior High School, where they disrupt classes by shouting and running through the halls.

Vandalism in school district No. 5, which includes 25 public schools in Central Harlem and the West Side, totalled $100,000 last year.

In spite of these incidents, however, most parents, teachers and school officials familiar with conditions in the schools do not believe their schools are in as bad shape as others in the city. . . .

—Manhattan Tribune, *March 22, 1969*

A west side story: II

West 85th Street between Riverside Drive and West End Avenue has gained the reputation among social workers in the last 10 years of being a "dumping ground" for some of the most insoluble of welfare problems—the ex-mental patients, alcoholics, disabled and aged who have no families and must live alone.

There are 400 welfare cases on the block, people living in furnished rooms that wind through a dozen old buildings. The views to the east and west belong to the middle-income apartments that line the main avenues bracketing the block; the idle on West 85th Street mainly look upon one another as they stand by the stoops or stare out the windows.

The cares of the day there include the loss of welfare checks to thieves and loan sharks and the fear of residents to use the hallway bathrooms because of prowling narcotics addicts.

However, the block has begun to fight back with the assistance of an experimental welfare program that residents praise because the caseworkers stay on the block all day, five days a week. In the rest of the city, caseworkers can visit recipients only occasionally,

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and the needy must make trips to one of the 38 area centers for extra help.

On West 85th Street, the Department of Social Services has opened a center whose caseload is limited to the block. Eight welfare workers serve there, assisted by three seminary volunteers, two workers from Vista (the domestic peace corps), and health specialists from local hospitals. Unlike the usual welfare procedure of waiting for the troubled to apply for aid, workers go from door to door trying to ferret out problems. "Don't feel left out," advises a two-page newspaper now produced on the block.

The idea for the block center came from Michelle Kleier, a young social worker who viewed her previous role as a roving caseworker as ineffective because she could get to the block only about a halfday each week. The center was opened in September, 1967, in a drab building at No. 325, with Mrs. Kleier in charge, after welfare officials had been convinced that the intensity of problems on the block was worth an experiment.

Speaking of the chances of success, Mrs. Kleier said she was encouraged because a sense of community had begun to vie with the prevailing mood of isolation.

"Get them out of their rooms," she said.

The center is now the heart of the block, offering an alcoholic clinic staffed by welfare specialists from the Bowery, a high-school equivalency course; a furniture workshop, sewing lessons, cooking classes for potential cafeteria workers, health services, and a place to meet at night for Bingo, Pokeno and conversation.

"I say this place is a blessing," Mrs. Helen D'Arcy, a thin, retired chambermaid, said. She told how she became a Bingo champion after years of "keeping to myself" on the block.

Mrs. D'Arcy and other elderly residents complained that their lives were still disrupted by criminals.

Detectives and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation descended on the block recently when welfare checks were to be delivered. The rumor was that they were after a group of young loansharks and narcotics addicts who engaged in usury in one building and had been intercepting checks and terrorizing residents. But no arrests were reported.

"I don't know, some landlords just don't care what goes on," said Wolf Zigmond, a landlord at No. 342. He stood near the barred window of a lobby office from which his tenants' checks are distributed. Residents have long despaired of mailboxes, which have been rifled by thieves.

Mr. Zigmond said he cashed the checks for his tenants and took "only what is mine"—rents averaging $18 a week for a room plus occasional loans of $5 or less, which he said were interest free.

The more hopeful programs are those concerned with schooling or jobs for young parents, social workers indicate. But the limited outlook for the bulk of West 85th Street's residents, troubled by old age, drink and disability, is that the center might bring a bit of comfort and friendship to their lives. . . .

—New York Times, *March 23, 1969*

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New York's housing: A study in *immobilisme*

GEORGE STERNLIEB

NEW YORK is unique among American cities in that it has the greatest potential freedom of choice to define its future. The market realities of all but a handful of our cities are such that they have no alternative to being what they are —the repositories of those who are occupationally bound to them, with a small supplement of free-floating central-city workers, transient intellectuals, and the like. But New York, as the business capital of the world, has the basic capacity substantially to shape itself. No single industry predominates. No single firm is terribly important. The skills of its labor force are, to an extraordinary extent, marketable elsewhere. And new jobs, mainly white collar, are constantly attracting new workers to the city. In the last six months alone, the construction of commercial buildings that will employ upwards of 100,000 people was announced. No other American city is in such a constant state of flux and of self-transformation. There is then capacity to change—but is there the will?

Amid all this, more than a million people are on the welfare rolls, and the number is increasing by nearly 12,000 a month. Only the rich can live in New York and still succeed in isolating themselves, at least to some degree from the very poor. The middle class, lacking the appurtenances of defense—the vacation house, the twenty-four-hour doorman, the access to private schools—is being driven out, though it is still a numerical majority. Housing policy in the

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city continues to waver between the two sharp crests of demand: the rich and the poor. So, even as New York changes, its housing policy is frozen into a self-defeating, inertial equilibrium.

If the city obeyed only the economic realities, it would seek to maximize the housing opportunities for the well-to-do and middle class: the executives, the mini-executives, the skilled white collar workers, the young professionals, etc. Such tenants—self-financing, with small families—impose a relatively small burden on the city's budget, while at the same time expanding its tax base. With the income derived from this type of housing, the city could then invest in amenities—including subsidized housing—for the poor. But the political folklore of our day inhibits such a traditional exploitation of the housing market's potentialities. City planners find their sense of social justice violated by it. Political leaders would risk their necks if they sanctioned it. Consequently, we find the emphasis on a "balanced" housing policy, and especially on the use of new housing developments to "integrate" the economic classes. Such emphasis is given further weight by the fact that the city's land-use controls, tax policies, and the like give the political authorities nearly complete power to either encourage or frustrate major construction programs.

Faced with a conflict between social priorities and market facts, officialdom has resorted to a "strategy" of inertia. A recent proposal, for example, to utilize a substantial segment of the air space over the West Side Highway for high-rise luxury housing bogged down for a number of reasons—not the least of which was the insistence by a variety of pressure groups that at least 25 per cent of the units be given over to the housing of the poor. Because the rich may love the poor but don't like to live too near them, the developer took his chips and went away.[1] More and more frequently, in New York these days, the choice is between no housing and "economically segregated" housing, and the result is no private investment in housing.

The housing stock

The growth of New York City as the nation's corporate headquarters has reinforced the divisions of the city's housing stock that have

[1] At this writing the future of Battery Park City is bogged down in a similar controversy. This proposal would fill the wharf area at the southwestern tip of Manhattan and create ninety acres of new land immediately adjacent to the financial center. In an effort to forestall the inevitable, present plans provide that a third of the 15,000 units to be constructed on the site shall be in subsidized housing for low and middle income families. But now political pressure is mounting to subsidize the majority of the site's housing. The argument that, on a fully taxable base, the city's earnings per luxury unit constructed on this site would enable it to build *two* units of subsidized housing elsewhere seems to cut no ice. Forecasting is a dangerous profession. But as in the case of the starving donkey unable to decide between two equally distant trusses of straw, there will, in all probability, be no resolution of this dilemma.

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been clearly delineated for more than a generation. When we speak of New York City's housing stock, we speak of essentially three relatively disjointed segments:

1. *The Gold Coast*

This housing complements the city's growth industry, i.e., white collar work. A large portion of the participants in this area live outside New York and, therefore, outside the bounds of this discussion. A significant proportion, however, do live inside the city, typically within a small geographical portion that of Manhattan south of 96th Street. If we exclude the lower east side, some of the remnant tenements awaiting high-rental rehabilitation and/or replacement by high-cost housing, and additionally some of the west side slums that are fast disappearing under the impact of a revitalized Lincoln Square, we behold here a city and a real estate market unto itself.

In character and in type of inhabitant, it is not too dissimilar from the small area of Brooklyn Heights that faces it across the East River. The inhabitants of this area either work in the New Monuments to American Industry or furnish the complementary services required by them, i.e., the physicians, lawyers, accountants. Their location in these limited, discrete areas is in part a reflection of logistics, of proximity to the major employment nodes. But a glance at a subway map of New York would indicate that there are many other equally convenient areas in other sections of the city that have no allure. To the naked eye, there is nothing wrong with these areas except that people with money refuse to live there. The path of Marjorie Morningstar's parents from the elite areas of Jewish Harlem, to the west side towers, and then in all probability to their east side equivalent was a reflection less of the deterioration of the several earlier areas than of the full flourishing of the Morningstar exchequer. The new concentration is largely self-imposed and results in the decline of peripheral elite residential areas.

The concentration in one area has been complicated by the influx of central-city-oriented individuals with money to the city. The latter term, "to the city," does not mean to New York City per se, but rather to a vision of New York seemingly only fulfilled within a small part of its geography. To many people the city begins somewhere around city hall and ends where Harlem begins. Although there are small outposts of revived quarters—for example, Brooklyn Heights and possibly the Park Slope area of Brooklyn—they are limited indeed. The subways still run, surprisingly enough, frequently on time, and the distance from Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant area to midtown is perhaps no more than fifteen or twenty minutes. But it is a quantum jump in land values, from perhaps no more

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than $3 or $4 a square foot to land that sometimes trades for as much as 100 times that.

In large part, the rich are where they are because the rich are there. Every small-town father, faced with his children's decision to move to New York reads lurid headlines about crime in the streets and makes their move conditional on their location in an appropriate address, i.e., typically a midtown east side one, with rental support paying the cost of the doorman. It is an area of childless families, of doubled-up young people, of social and economic mobility starting at a relatively high plateau. *In all rentor-occupied housing units in Manhattan, 73.5 per cent are occupied by one- and two-person households. Indeed, for the city as a whole, 72.8 per cent of all "new" (built after 1947) rental housing units have no children under eighteen.* Rentals in these new facilities are commonly more than $100 per room.

2. *The residence of the poor*

Within this same municipality live more than one million people on welfare. In addition, it is a fact that the bulk of New York's manufacturing jobs are relatively low-paying. The city, therefore, must house not merely those on welfare but also its working poor. Sometimes, such housing is cheek by jowl with those of the elite groups. The distance between the lower east side tenement and the new high-rise, high-cost apartment houses of the East Village may only be an alleyway. More typical, however, is physical segmentation of the city's housing areas by economic class and/or race.

Harlem still presents a very substantial refuge for many of the poor blacks. But Harlem is a tired, middle-aged community now, with incomes much higher and the proportion of children much lower than in the new "growth areas" for the poor. The largest of these is the Bedford Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn. Sections of the Bronx, too, serve as a refuge for the poor. Indeed, the south Bronx is rapidly becoming an environment whose impact on its inhabitants may be even more deleterious than that of the older slums. The lower east side, with its wall-to-wall, five- and six-story walk-up old law tenements, has partaken of every population shift in the city's history. The current surge is the replacement of Jews by a substantially Puerto Rican and Negro population. But the lower east side is, like Harlem, an area moving gradually into decay. Like Harlem, it is steadily losing population.

3. *Burgherland*

Uncomfortably sited between the two groups noted above is the largest single element of New York City population, the middle class.

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New York, by most definitions, is a middle-income city, with 56 per cent of its households in the $5,000-to-$15,000-a-year bracket. *Nearly a quarter of the city's population lives in one- and two-family houses, largely concentrated in Brooklyn and Queens.* And the number of Negro and Puerto Rican homeowners in the city went from under 50,000 to over 70,000 from 1950 to 1960; there is every indication that this trend has continued.

The Upper Bronx is lined with the six-story, semi-detached, fireproof, elevated apartment buildings that house—in common with sections of Brooklyn and Staten Island—the taxi driver, the dry-cleaning storeowner, the Wall Street clerk, and all the myriad families of the city with incomes and/or occupations and/or folkways that keep them from the suburbs but also keep them from falling into the slum areas. Queens is largely inhabited by the upper-income elements of this same group, with only a small proportion of Negro and Puerto Rican tenancy: a mere quarter of a million out of nearly two million residents. The equivalent figure for Negro and Puerto Rican tenants in Manhattan is 580,000 out of 1,435,000; for Brooklyn, 850,000 out of 2,507,000; for the Bronx, 580,000 out of 1,428,000.

The changing definition of property

Though the fact seems not widely to be recognized, New York City is by far the most sophisticated municipal government in the United States. As such, it provides us with some actual experience of approaches to housing that, in other cities, are still in the discussion stage. Basic to these approaches is the shift of the housing market away from one that, though often nourished by broad-based government financing, was essentially an activity of private industry. The options of private housing decision-making are now so limited by city government as to require a redefinition, a relabeling of the market actualities.

The bundle of rights and privileges we call property is far from immutable. The brief in Frank vs. Maryland 359 U.S. 360 (1959) states the basic fact of broad public interest in real estate perhaps as succinctly as it can be stated.

> A man's home may be his castle, but that castle no longer sits on a hill surrounded by a moat. The modern castle is connected to a central water system, a sewerage system, a garbage collection system, and frequently houses on either side.

Real estate, the prototype and foundation of the legal definition of property, is particularly susceptible to social pressures. Inherently, it is uniquely subject to the impact of local laws and prejudices. Unlike most other forms of property, it is immobile: the banks may

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move their investment elsewhere; when accused of overly high prices, the supermarket operator simply closes the store and bobs up in a more congenial and profitable atmosphere; the credit merchant can always peddle in another jurisdiction. The apartment house, fixed in space, is a much more dependable hostage. I say "apartment house" rather than "house" because it is the multiple-family dwelling, where the votes represented by the tenantry naturally exceed the votes typically under the command of the owner —which is most vulnerable to political pressures. And in New York City 75 per cent of families live in multiple-family dwellings, as against a much smaller percentage in other major cities. Indeed, 45 per cent of the apartment houses in the United States are located in New York.

In New York City, the functional relationship of the private landlord to the residential real estate market is becoming less significant year by year. The basic rent levels are those set by rent control, which still survives in New York though hardly anywhere else. (Two thirds of the city's housing stock is under strict control; rent increases in the remaining one third have also recently been brought under control.)[2] The levels of maintenance, which substantially define the

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[2] The subject of rent control is far too complex to be discussed in the space available here. Suffice it to say that the Temporary Rent Control Law was passed in 1943, during the war, and has continued on temporarily, if not merrily, ever since—with no end in sight.

Answers to the question of whether rent control in and of itself has generated a misallocation of residential space within the city—of old, childless families continuing to live in large apartments while the relative newcomers, typically the minority groups with children, can find only less desirable or more expensive accommodations—must be somewhat conjectural. Still, something of the sort does seem to have happened.

Based on the 1968 Housing Vacancy Survey conducted by the Census Bureau, there seems little doubt that there is far less turnover in the more desirable rent-controlled facilities (inhabited mainly by whites) than there is in the poor, controlled ones. The city's old law tenements, five- and 6-story walk-ups typically, with a predominance of poor, minority-group tenantry, would seem to have the greatest degree of turnover, whereas the more modern rent-controlled buildings, particularly those in structures built after 1929, and inhabited by predominantly white and middle (or even upper) income groups, show signs of a tenantry that simply doesn't move.

Similarly, a glance at data on persons per room shows that well over 50,000 controlled units of post-1929 construction have one half or fewer persons per room—a supply more than adequate to rehouse, at densities of only a little more than one person to the room—*all* the families now living in overcrowded old law tenements. *Indeed, the amount of space, per capita, in rent-controlled housing, is often higher than in noncontrolled (including luxury)* housing; 43.5 per cent of controlled housing units have .5 or less persons per room whereas for the noncontrolled the equivalent percentage is 35.3 per cent.

There is thus every indication that it is not the ethnic minorities of the city, the poor Puerto Ricans and the blacks, who benefit most from rent control, but rather middle class whites. It should be noted in this context that *barely a fifth of all white households in rent-controlled apartments in the city have children under eighteen.* For blacks the proportion of such families with young children is double that, and among Puerto Ricans it is nearly two-thirds greater.

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cash outflow from the property, are similarly determined—or at least stringent efforts are made to determine them—through the intervention of code enforcement. The right to choose tenants, and to evict at pleasure, are things of the past, often sighed for by owners but scarcely to be regained.

The erosion of the classic bundle of rights and privileges of property, which is a clear-cut phenomenon everywhere in the United States, is more apparent in New York City because of rent control. There are few other forms of property that the courts have treated as casually. For example: the implicit legalization of rent strikes as a political fact of life; the capacity (in New York today, elsewhere tomorrow) for the city to move into a building that is not properly maintained according to the letter of the law, make repairs, and then bill the landlord for them; the ability of the city to reduce rents, because of violations, to a nominal dollar-a-month; the power to subject the landlord to criminal penalties for mismanagement—all this is fast becoming "normal."

Given these restrictions, the "possession" of residential real estate becomes a most tenuous good. In the better areas of west side Manhattan, for example, there are excellent apartments in large rent-controlled buildings with monthly rents of $20 to $25 per room, or half their open market value. Owners who wish to sell these buildings frequently find that their best buyers are the present tenants organized as a cooperative. But before the building can be converted into a cooperative, a significant proportion of the tenants must agree. And, because they already enjoy bargain rents, they will only do this if they get a bargain purchase. They often do. *The New York Times* has reported a number of recent instances in which tenants purchased their apartments at the equivalent of $3,000 per room and then promptly resold them for the equivalent of $7,000 per room—that is, at their free market value once the specter of rent control was lifted. In essence, the state, in league with the middle class renter (there are few poor in the category of buildings discussed), has disposed of the middle class owner's property.

For the assault on real property is not the monopoly of the poor; the middle class, with short-sighted rapacity, has lustfully joined in the game. All of the heretofore uncontrolled housing in the city—typically post-1947 construction—is now rent controlled. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to envision fresh private residential funds flowing into the city. And because high rise, high rent housing is one of the more significant elements of the city's ratable structure, this will have a considerable fiscal impact. The net result is

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Could one protect rentals for the poor while abolishing the "free ride" that the middle class now receives from rent control? No one has as yet come up with an answer—perhaps because no one is looking very hard for one. These middle class people, after all, do represent a lot of votes.

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that one element of the middle class is subsidized at the expense of another—not to mention the poor who depend on the city's taxes for supporting services.

As a result, we see two markets developing in New York: one subject to the immediacies of the political pressures of the central city, the other much closer to the classic realty market, the suburbs. The fact that private funds and entrepreneurial skill flow to the latter needs no explanation.

As the spectrum of options available to the owner of urban real estate narrows, the function of private ownership is increasingly open to question. When this is complemented by the failure of private construction to add to the housing stock, regardless of the explanations, the principal historical reason for any over-all political commitment to private operation goes by the board. And this is what is occurring.

New housing

It is especially when we turn to new housing construction that it is clear that the basic model of housing activity in the United States —essentially that of private enterprise aided by government financing—has very little relevance to the realities of the urban scene. This is particularly the case with New York. The private new housing market in New York City has ground to a near halt. The levels of rent necessary to make new housing in the city an economically viable proposition are such that, without very definite and specific governmental intervention, they have become prohibitive. In the 1950's, 73 per cent of New York's new housing was private and unsubsidized. The ratio is now nearing the 50 per cent mark. There is every prospect that this trend will be accentuated in the future.

Why should this be the case? After all, the suburbs are filled with hungry tract-developers, garden-apartment builders, and the like, who rarely even take advantage of FHA financing, and seemingly need little else. I think the answer for New York City—and it is an answer of terrible significance to all major cities—is that there is comparatively little money to be made in residential construction in the central city. New York City still has its Gold Coast, and within that Gold Coast this generalization would not hold true. But once one leaves that area and its pitifully small equivalents in other cities, there is little to attract the developer other than the fast returns secured by a bail-out mortgage. Private builders require extra large rewards to build in poor areas, where their investment is riskier; such rewards are not now available. And in New York City they face, in addition, a conflict of municipal priorities when they try to build in good areas.

There is nothing more conducive to the generation of inertia than

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the clash of righteous platitudes. A striking example of this rule is the question of the density of zoning to be permitted in residential areas of New York. Six years ago, with much fanfare, new zoning regulations were promulgated in the city. The group responsible for them pointed to the "inhuman" levels of density that characterized most new residential development, particularly in Manhattan, and further pointed to the disappearance of the low-rise structures which enriched "the human scale" of the city. The new zoning plan adopted to right these wrongs had, as a primary aim, the stabilization of Manhattan's residential densities, while at the same time encouraging development in other boroughs. An enormous rush by the construction industry to develop properties prior to the enforcement of these new requirements flooded the housing market of the city for the several years that followed. This has now come to an end and with the termination of the old era of intensive development, a new age of more appropriate levels of density in housing should be opening. This may be the case but only at the cost of no construction whatsoever.

Despite romantic hopes to the contrary, the development of high-rise luxury apartments outside Manhattan and a few selected areas of Queens has been noticeable only by its absence, and the city's privately financed housing is immobilized.

Despite a fantastically low vacancy rate in luxury buildings (little more than 1 per cent), there is next to no new construction underway. Privately financed, full taxpaying new units completed in Manhattan have gone from ninety-three buildings with 13,000 units in 1963 to five last year with 1,154 apartments. It is estimated that no more than fifteen to twenty privately financed multifamily buildings have been completed or are in construction in Manhattan under the new zoning ordinance. Virtually all the completions since 1961 were under the old zoning ordinance.

The demons and villains in this drama are many. Not least among them may be developers who are holding their land rather than building on it, with the hope of being able eventually to secure heavier levels of density (and therefore greater value) from the authorities. The developers' retort to this accusation is quite simple and not without some cogency: given the income-expense ratios of present-day construction, and the levels of density most of Manhattan is subject to, the economic minimum for a building site under the new regulations is approximately three quarters of an acre in area—as contrasted with a little more than half this area under the old zoning regulations. And the cost of assembling land goes up nearly *geometrically* as the parcel is increased in size. Thus, little new housing, and that ferociously expensive, in only a few choice locations, is constructed.

Has New York City residential development been at an inhuman

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scale? The question, as phrased, would probably get an affirmative response, particularly from those New Yorkers who are already satisfactorily housed. Is maintaining a lower level of density of development worthwhile, in the face of an acute housing shortage? I suspect that this question would get a more ambivalent answer today. Everyone may be for lower residential density but few people are actually in favor of a housing shortage.

Some relief from this situation has been sought recently by city hall, which has encouraged the rezoning of three Manhattan areas at present relatively lightly developed with low-rise tenements and light-manufacturing lofts. But here, once again, a war cry goes up that the use of this land will reduce the number of relatively unskilled jobs in Manhattan, which are few enough in number as is, and that in addition there will be some dislocation of the poor. Even when the actual level of dislocation involved in the several sites turns out to be minimal, the opponents are not appeased. For permission to erect housing with a high level of density next to low-density poor areas will intensify the pressure to convert those latter areas to more rewarding forms of real estate improvement and will ultimately lead to the displacement of the poor. These last criticisms have been advanced by, among others, an insurgent group within the city planning commission. Predictably, the municipal response has been to take the path of least resistance—to do nothing.

These incidents are significant, not only in and of themselves, but perhaps even more so as an indication of the indecisiveness which municipal policy-making must fall prey to, until it has more clearly defined its role and purpose. In this clash of the "brights"—the young, college-educated city planners, social workers, poverty warriors lured to New York as the locus of "action" from all over the United States—with the natural market tendencies, there are no obvious, clear-cut answers. Any answer will be costly to—and seen as unjust by—a segment of the community. On the other hand, no answer is costly to all, and is felt as an injustice by all.

Public housing—the nest of dilemmas

There are only a limited number of satisfactory sites for housing the rich. Middle class subsidized housing, even with tax-exempt forty-year mortgages and 50 per cent tax rebates, costs $50 a room, which strains any middle class budget. What of public housing for the poor?

Public housing is the apotheosis of all the frustrations inherent in the city's housing problem. To begin with, we have the increase of construction costs clashing with the cost ceiling of federal support problems, despite the "extensions" given to so-called high costs areas. Little can be built in New York City that comes under the federal

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support standards. But it is much more than this fact that inhibits new public housing in the city. And here again we find a common dilemma that runs through all of the city's housing policies: to maximize the number of units constructed with the limited dollars available, or to improve the standards of what is constructed at the cost of reduced construction?

Operating and maintenance costs of public housing must be paid for by the tenantry. The federal contribution is substantially limited to the capital investment. Unless the units are built to be run cheaply, public housing simply is too expensive for the poor. But how can we minimize administrative costs, given the current reaction against "the hideous monoliths" and the current demand for small units on scattered sites? The conflict between providing shelter in bulk as against improving the quality of public housing has no resolution; the cost has been immobility.

The folklore of high-rise public housing that characterized the Robert Moses era of the city has been rejected in recent years. It has been rejected by "enlightened" city planners, "progressive" architects, by the intellectuals and *The New York Times*. Unfortunately, it turns out to be impossible, under present conditions, to build anything else, or more precisely, to build in suffiicent quantity to matter. Vest-pocket public housing makes good architectural news; it also tends to be slow in production, expensive, very difficult to secure sites for, and substantially nonexistent. Did it exist, most of the poor couldn't afford it because the operating costs, and hence the rentals, would be too high.

The fact is that the role of public housing in New York has been completely misunderstood, lost in a sea of rhetoric about regimented living conditions, overly homogeneous tenant groups, the exclusion of natural leaders by artificial income limitations, and so forth. Yet the reality of public housing in New York City is that, historically and up to the present time, it has provided a major source of housing for the working class. It has been able to do this by rigorously avoiding making public housing a form of welfare housing. Historically, New York's public housing has been built for a relatively stable, substantially employed sector of the city's population. As a result, there has been considerable stability of residents. Nearly 10 per cent of all the public housing residents in the city have lived in the same unit for more than fifteen years and an additional 21.2 per cent moved into their present units between 1954 and 1959, with 56.5 per cent coming in from 1960 to 1966.

This is now in the process of changing. Faced with operating deficits resulting from increased costs, unionization of maintenance workers, and so on, the city's housing authority is in the process of "raising" by 47 per cent the rents of the welfare recipients who occupy public housing. The increase is only on paper, of course. In

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other words, instead of an across-the-board increase in all rents, or an outright subsidy, funds will be juggled out of the welfare budget in the form of increased subsidies to the public housing structure. Because the welfare budget is already said to be inadequate, there is some mystery as to how this is going to accomplish very much. What the recent announcement of this ploy did highlight, however, is the substantial increase in the proportion of welfare recipients living in public housing over the last several years. Currently, one-sixth of public housing units are occupied by people on welfare and odds are very high that this discovery of a means of increasing rents without increasing them will drive the city, given its increased welfare rolls, to raise that proportion.

"Rehabilitation"

Perhaps something can at least be done to refurbish the city's existing stock of housing? Of the city's rental stock of 2,096,000 occupied rental units, more than a quarter of a million were built before 1902, less than a third since 1929. It would seem that something might be accomplished here. Alas, the simple but sad fact of life is that rehabilitation of central city housing, with the exception of few special cases, simply hasn't worked. Of the nearly quarter-of-a-million of New York City's dwelling units that are old law tenements, the bulk are four- or more-story walkups, nearly half are five and six stories. Their classic "dumbbell" shape, with narrow air shafts at the waist, have frustrated every effort at rehabilitation since they were constructed as "model tenements" prior to 1902.

Worth noting are two of the more publicized efforts: the "Instant Rehabilitation" effort and the 102nd Street Project. In the former, a scheme was devised for drilling a hole through the core of a set of old law tenements (using a specially constructed crane), gutting the center of the structure, and replacing the kitchens and bathrooms with prefabricated utility units lowered by the same crane through the roof—and all this in forty-eight hours! After a year's practice on a building purchased specially for the purpose, with much fanfare, the experiment was initiated. Deducting all the start-up expenses, the end result cost $38 a square foot, *slightly more than the most luxurious of new housing;* all this with the basic problems of vertical transportation, of narrow corridors and inadequate room configurations, relatively untouched!

An equally publicized rehabilitation effort, utilizing more conventional approaches, has been undertaken on West 102nd Street. Originally conceived as a very modest brush, paint-up, fix-up, rehabilitation effort, costing perhaps $3,000 a unit, present costs are substantially over the $13,000-a-unit figure, with an end product that is substantially unsatisfactory.

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The anecdotal material surrounding the fate of these two ventures (and others) is voluminous, but titillating as the stories of late contractors, recalcitrant unions, and uncooperative tenant organizations may be, they cannot obscure the basic message: if new housing for the poor costs too much—and in new housing, remember, we have all the efficiencies attendant on mass production and standardization—then rehabilitation of existing structures, which means a much higher level of hand work and individualized expertise, is even more uneconomical.[3]

The inescapable truth is that in housing rehabilitation we have come to the end of our string of platitudes. Though housing authorities keep mumbling ritualistic lip service to the concept, the reality seems much further away than it did just a few years ago.

But there is a further point to be made. If rehabilitation cannot help the poor, it could help the well-to-do. New York City—at least that part of the city sited on Manhattan south of Harlem—has an upper class housing demand without parallel in the United States. Rehabilitation to service this demand is entirely practicable within the present-day cost context. Yet here, once again, we run into the Hamlet-like inability of the municipal authorities to decide on housing policy because satisfying the housing needs of the rich does mean, to some extent, frustrating the housing demands of the poor.

It is the difficulty in rehousing the dislocatees as a function of renewal and rehabilitation efforts that more than any other single factor inhibits private activity in this sphere. Statutory rights of tenants in New York are without peer in any other major American city. The political realities of the day enable old law six-story walk-up tenements, with average rent rolls of perhaps $40 an apartment, to occupy land that, if cleared, would be worth substantially more than $100 per square foot—or if massively rehabilitated, would have apartments renting for $100 or more a room per month.

Whether in the long run this is good even for the poor, or whether the flow of funds into municipal coffers that housing for the affluent might secure would better serve their purposes, has yet to be thought through.

The maintenance problem

The maintenance of housing in New York City is more difficult than in most other municipalities. New York shares with the latter

[3] A recent analysis of the economics of rehabilitation by the then chief of program planning and development for the New York Housing Development Administration summarizes the situation very accurately, if depressingly. In this study, Frank Kristof took a half dozen of the modular forms of New York City housing and subjected each to an analysis of rehabilitation costs. He then matched the latter to the smorgasbord of available federal, state and municipal programs. As an exercise in frustration, it is unbeatable.

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the problems of the poor; of their size of families; of the tensions between minority tenantry and white landlords; of owners faced with a profitless future and unsaleable property playing "end game" —attempting to drain their buildings of whatever cash can be secured before abandoning them. But all these are complicated by the tenure characteristics and size of structure unique to New York City.

Three quarters of all New York City's housing is rental; this contrasts with less than half that figure in Philadelphia, for example. In addition, and much more significant, is the fact of the size of buildings in New York City. More than two thirds of the rental housing is in buildings with twenty or more units. Indeed, nearly 20 per cent of the units are in buildings with one hundred apartment units and over. There are certain efficiencies of scale in the maintenance of such large structures; but there is also a greater vulnerability to the "contamination effect."

In areas with one- and two-family houses, the impact of the problem tenant—the junkie, the whore, the drunkard, the psychotic, the criminal—is minimized. Though he may be a pain in the neck to his neighbors, his effect on them is relatively trivial as contrasted with the potential of the same tenant in a large structure. The drug-addicted tenant, who hacks out the copper pipes or radiators for sale to the local junk dealer, would in most cities usually be inconveniencing perhaps one or two families. In New York City, on the other hand, the odds are high that he may be closing down the housing of ten times that number. It only takes two or three problem tenants to make the living conditions in a 100-family building unbearable. The degree of control over tenants required to maintain large structures, therefore, is very high indeed.

Such control is very difficult to achieve in New York for political reasons. Tenants not only have their rights inscribed in law; they even have lawyers paid by the Office of Economic Opportunity, to defend these rights. Getting rid of the problem tenant is a herculean effort that is rarely even made. The contagion effect on the other tenants is massive. "Why should I try to maintain my apartment when nobody else gives a damn?" So he doesn't. And the building becomes a shambles—very soon, an uninhabitable shambles.

The dynamics of slum development, obviously, are not unique to New York. They are accentuated, however, by the size of structure. And their symbol is the zones of abandonment.

Zones of abandonment

The jarring incongruity of a very tight housing market occurring simultaneously with the virtual abandonment of literally thousands of residential buildings is one of the paradoxes of our older cities—and especially of New York. Though the precise figure is somewhat

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controversial, there are in New York today probably somewhere in the vicinity of 5,000 multiple-tenancy buildings, containing at least five or six times that number of apartments, which have been vacated by the tenantry and, to all intents and purposes, abandoned by the owners. These abandoned residential buildings are concentrated in two areas: the bulk of them are in the Brownsville-East New York section of Brooklyn, but there are a fair number in the Williamsburg and Bedford Stuyvesant sections. (The incidence of this phenomenon in Harlem is also increasing.) Many of the buildings are not old law tenements (i.e., built before 1902) but rather —particularly in the Brownsville-East New York section—are four-story walkups built in the early 1900's to house the flood of first-generation Jews and Italians leaving the squalor of the east side for better housing. The blocks Alfred Kazin described so movingly in *A Walker in the City* are now, many of them, littered with the wreckage of broken and abandoned buildings. Some streets look as if they had been bombed by B-52's.

It is easy to comprehend why these buildings get abandoned. It is less easy to understand why they *remain* abandoned in a period of what everyone agrees to be acute housing shortage. But I would suggest that the reason is that for the first time in our history there is no poor immigrant group—poor, but with a middle class ethos—to move into the derelict houses: to move into them *and* to maintain them. Indeed, if there had been no agrarian migration across the Mason-Dixon line, and its equivalent from the Caribbean, the incidence of vacated buildings would probably have occurred earlier. Now, the flow of migrants from Puerto Rico into New York has substantially stabilized, and though the movement of Negroes from the South continues, it does so—as best as we can read the evidence—at a reduced rate. Increasingly, the move is to more attractive areas than some of the older cities—to smaller cities, and especially to the suburbs. Despite the exhortations of activists anxious for geographic concentration as a way station toward political power, the Negro and Puerto Rican middle class, and to an increasing extent the working class too, are voting with its feet—away from the central city. And there are no replacements.

The abandoned buildings are abandoned only when they are in dreadful condition. No reasonable observer can make very much of a brief for their continued utilization. But this has always been true, in greater or lesser degree, of bottom-of-the-barrel housing. Ours is a unique turning point in New York history. Given the legislation and climate of opinion which makes up our welfare state, and given the lack of new immigrants, such bottom-of-the-barrel housing no longer has any sound function. People on welfare don't want to live there, and no welfare official would even dream of "dumping" them there. Such housing is beyond the pale in our society.

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The particular incidence of abandonment, i.e., where it takes place, and in which structures, is subject to much accidental variation. In some cases, particularly in the Brownsville area, the buildings abandoned are not the worst in the city. The particular reason for the specific choice of building or area is a compound of ownership characteristics, sometimes drug addiction problems in the neighborhood, of tenant vandalization, and the like. The basic message, however, that comes through all of this anecdotal material is that essentially there is no economic market for these buildings in spite of the fact that the city's poor, its middle class, and its wealthy all suffer from a housing shortage!

The slums of New York are growing at their periphery and dying at their core. At this periphery, older white housing, sustained in fair condition by the relatively advanced age of the inhabitants and their relative childlessness, but systematically under-maintained for a generation, is being submerged by Negro and Puerto Rican emigration from the hard core. Left behind are structures of very marginal value, indeed. The economic—even the humane—logic of the situation would seem to call for the bulldozer. But the political logic of the situation makes this impossible. Before you can call in the bulldozer, you have to have a notion of what kind of housing you want to put up—and then you have to reconcile this with budgetary and/or market constraints. In New York City, such a reconciliation, which will involve hard and often unpopular decisions, seems beyond the power of government.

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NEWSREEL

The case of the vanishing super

For most New Yorkers, the end of the week-long fuel strike meant a return to normalcy, but for tenants of one West Side building their hope for an end to freezing temperatures in their apartments rests on their search for a super.

For three months, 18 families who live at 29 West 104th Street, a rundown tenement off Central Park West, have been without heat. The residents, most of whom are Spanish speaking, have staged a protest by withholding rents once the boiler stopped operating in October. But their action hasn't gotten them any heat.

Their problem began when the former super locked the boiler room one day, and then disappeared. He hasn't been located since. The tenants contacted the landlord, but he couldn't find the super. In November, the city's Department of Rent and Housing sent a repairman to the building. But the boiler room was still locked and the super still had not put in an appearance.

The repairman made several return trips to the building, but it was not until Dec. 13 that he was able to gain access to the boiler room. By this time the water pipes had broken and water was leaking onto the electrical wiring in the basement. The city, fearing a fire, ordered the water in the building turned off. So the tenants who previously had only cold water now had no water at all.

Last Friday, the city dispatched an emergency repair crew to the building, which repaired the boiler and plugged up some of the pipes. A few still leak, but a spokesman from the Rent and Housing Maintenance Department said the situation is under control.

The problem now is the boiler which operates on coal instead of oil. It works, but there's no one to shovel the coal every morning. The city is willing to train and pay a super for the job and bill the owner of the building for the cost, but they can't find anyone to take the job.

Members of local community organizations, once they learned about the situation, have been looking for a man to take the job, but they haven't found anyone yet either.

A worker at the Hamilton Welfare Center who is familiar with the situation has been scouting the block trying to find young men who would be willing to accept the job, but the Department of Social Services has discouraged this practice. The Department's concern, the worker said, is that a person solicited for the job might get the impression his welfare money would be discontinued if he doesn't accept it.

In the meantime, the mystery surrounding the whereabouts of the old super deepens. No one seems to know where he is or in fact exactly when he left. Tenants say he stopped coming to the building some time ago, but no one is certain how long ago.

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The landlord, too, has proved elusive. Community workers who have been involved with the tenants action say they have not been able to contact him. Rumors have it there is a warrant for his arrest. But no one is certain.

Through it all, the tenants and the city are still looking for a superintendent. Up to now they have had no takers. If they don't find one, despite the end of the fuel strike, there is not likely to be any heat for 18 families on West 104th Street.

—The Manhattan Tribune, *December 28, 1968*

Eviction drama

The end for two dozen West 85th Street rooming house tenants scheduled for eviction the day after Christmas, came Friday with a small demonstration at the local community center. On hand to record the event for posterity were a television camera crew and a couple of reporters.

Some 500 people had been expected, but with the temperature around freezing, it was no weather for a demonstration. At its height, there were no more than 50 people, including welfare workers, VISTA volunteers and members of the city's housing department.

There was Manfred Ohrenstein, a state senator from the district, who appeared briefly, made his way through the rubble and cinders of the building from which the tenants are being evicted and left. City Councilman Theodore Weiss, who introduced a bill in the council that would have protected the tenants if it had been submitted earlier, was not there. He was at a Board of Estimate hearing.

Jesse Gray, a black organizer who led some successful rent strikes in East Harlem a few years ago, was on hand. He had promised to produce hundreds of people for Friday's demonstration. Instead, he appeared with three heavy-set men in thick jackets, made a brief speech in front of the TV cameras and left.

Before leaving he told the group, "You've got to put pressure on the city. If you don't start the ball rolling now, you'll lose every block in the city." After five minutes more, TV lights switched off, and he headed back to his men. "Come on, let's get the hell out of here," one of them said. "There's too much diplomacy in this place." Gray's visit lasted about 20 minutes.

Lillian Zerwick, head of the Amsterdam Welfare Center, told the tenants why the welfare department could not do much. "We can't build buildings," she explained. "We're not in the housing business."

Tempers flared late in the afternoon, when a brief scuffle broke out between a blockworker and one of the tenants to be evicted. "He's been drinking steadily for the past 24 hours," a resident of the block said of the tenant. "I'm not surprised."

But the outbreak destroyed whatever vestiges of community spirit had lingered and the room started to buzz with talk of the incident. "It's so stupid," one woman complained. "They start fighting, and everybody's still getting thrown out of their homes. Nothing makes any difference."

The 23 tenants facing eviction will get a few concessions from the city. The welfare department will put them up in temporary homes,

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so they won't be out on the street with their belongings when the city marshals come December 26. And each tenant will get $100 from the city to help him with moving expenses. Each tenant will also get a choice of apartments. . . .

—Manhattan Tribune, *December 28, 1968*

Master builder's plan

Robert Moses, New York's master builder, has never been a man of small ideas. In a public-service career spanning five decades, the 80-year-old Moses has transformed the city—sometimes, it seemed, by sheer force of character—with seven major bridges, two tunnels, 658 parks and playgrounds, 17 miles of beaches, a quarter of a million housing units and uncounted miles of expressways. But last week, in semi-retirement, Moses came up with what may be the biggest idea of all: a plan to knock down and rebuild entire square miles of central Brooklyn, an area that Moses calls "the largest urban slum in America."

The $1 billion first stage of the plan is as controversial as anything Moses has ever suggested. He proposes to use 450 acres of land, owned by the city and the Federal government on a sand spit jutting into the Atlantic, to put up new housing units, stores and parks for 160,000 slum residents. Unlike most urban-renewal plans, this would bypass the thorny problem of relocation for slum residents; except for the nearly abandoned Fort Tilden, the land now contains only a few half-finished buildings—and Moses says they could be adapted for his project. After the new residents move into the project, he says, their old homes could be leveled to make room for more projects in central Brooklyn. . . .

In a time when rehabilitation and scattered-site housing are capturing most official attention, Moses's plan got a chilly reception from city authorities. Housing and Development Administrator Jason Nathan said it would merely "ship out 160,000 people from the Brooklyn ghetto to another ghetto 15 miles from everyplace. This is sweeping the problem under the rug in grand style.

With characteristic bluntness, Moses concedes most of his critics' points. Certainly, he says, the buildings will be drab and institutional: "There's just no other way" to keep costs down. Transportation to the project would be a major problem; but, says Moses, "If the transportation were very good, the land wouldn't be vacant now." And of course, he says, Atlantic Villagers will be mainly black and Puerto Rican. "Academics feel it is more important to take care of civil rights than shelter," he says. "Well, as a subject for a seminar, that's very interesting. But I don't think it's the point." . . .

—Newsweek, *May 12, 1969*

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The community revolution

DANIEL BELL & VIRGINIA HELD

. . . Two neighbors may agree to drain a meadow, which they possess in common: because it is easy for them to know each other's mind; and each must perceive, that the immediate consequence of his failing in his part, is the abandoning the whole project. But it is very difficult, and indeed impossible, that a thousand persons should agree in any such action; it being difficult for them to concert so complicated a design, and still more difficult for them to execute it; while each seeks a pretext to free himself of the trouble and expense, and would lay the whole burden on others. Political society easily remedies both these inconveniences. . . . Thus, bridges are built, harbours opened, ramparts raised, canals formed, fleets equipped, and armies disciplined, everywhere, by the care of government, which, though composed of men subject to all human infirmities, becomes, by one of the finest and most subtile inventions imaginable, a composition which is in some measure exempted from all these infirmities. — David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*

One cliché of contemporary political discourse is that "the people have no real voice—or, less and less of a voice—in their political affairs," a view reinforced by a ponderous academic sociology that asserts "a decline or eclipse of the local community" and a change wherein "all groupings based on traditional criteria such as shared ethnic descent and inheritance of status are undermined. . . ."

We believe both assertions to be quite wrong. In fact, the opposite may be true—that there is more participation than ever before in American society, particularly in the large urban centers such as New York, and more opportunity for the active and interested person to express his political and social concerns. That very state of affairs leads to a paradox because it is the increase in participation which creates a sense of powerlessness and consequent frustration.

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A person who is socially conscious wants results, particularly *his* results, and he wants them immediately. But the very fact that there is an increase in the number of claimants leads, inevitably, to lengthier consultation and mediation, and more importantly, to a situation wherein thousands of different organizations, each wanting diverse and contradictory things, simply check each other in their demands. As a Mrs. Gladys Gonzales, vice-president of the Parents Teachers Association of Junior High School 71, is reported as saying at the public hearings of the Board of Education on the school decentralization plan, "You graciously allow us to say what is on our mind and then turn around and do what you want to do anyway." But this is precisely what *every* speaker, whatever his point of view, feels and says at such a meeting; and the result is rancor and a sense of frustration.

Forty years ago, a Tammany political boss could give an order to a mayor. Today, no such simple action is possible. On each political issue—decentralization or community control, the mix of low income and middle income housing, the proportion of blacks in the city colleges, the location of a cross-Manhattan or cross-Brooklyn expressway, etc.—there are dozens of active, vocal, and conflicting organized opinions. The difficulty in governing New York—and many other cities as well—is not the "lack of voice" of individuals in city affairs, or the "eclipse of local community," but the babel of voices and the multiplication of claimants in the widened political arena. In this new participatory democracy the need is for the creation of new political mechanisms that will allow for the establishment of priorities in the city, and for some effective bargaining and tradeoffs between groups; without that the city may end in a shambles.

The multifarious associations

Writing on his trip to the United States in 1904, Max Weber could comment, after Tocqueville, "In the past and up to the present, it has been a characteristic precisely of the specifically American democracy that it did *not* constitute a formless sandheap of individuals, but rather a buzzing complex of strictly exclusive, yet voluntary associations."

No count has ever been made of the number of voluntary associations in the United States or in any major American city. In New York, the *Directory of Social and Health Agencies of New York City* lists 1200 welfare organizations, voluntary and public, excluding civic, educational, and religious organizations. Ten years ago, Sayre and Kaufman in *Governing New York City* remarked, "No careful census of these nongovernmental groups in the city has ever been made, but the number seems to run at least to *tens of thousands.* This estimate comprises only those groups sufficiently well organized

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to have letterheads, telephones, and/or to appear in some published directory." (our italics)

Whatever the total ten years ago, the number of groups, particularly local block associations, tenants organizations, welfare councils—name the issue and a dozen groups spring into being—have since multiplied spectacularly. The chief reason has been the revolution in the political structure of urban life that was initiated by the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, a development obscured and to some extent distorted by the Vietnam war. Just as the Wagner Act of 1935 facilitated—indeed, shaped—the organization of the economic workplace by trade unions, so the community action provisions of the Poverty Act of 1964 established the basis for neighborhood organization by community groups. In so doing, it has created a potential for political bargaining on urban community issues just as there is economic bargaining on issues in the workplace.

There are substantial differences of course. The Wagner Act created a rule-making institution in the National Labor Relations Board with well-defined contestants, specific issues, and real pay-offs. The structure of political bargaining in the community is still inchoate. Whether it will function is moot. The system has been quickly repudiated, in part, by the Johnson and Nixon administrations; the militants, who initially sought to take advantage of the system to gain a place in society, have turned to more radical and direct action tactics; and the established political machines have fought the community action programs and in many places have taken them over. Yet the potential remains, particularly in New York City, for disadvantaged groups—or more specifically their indigenous leaders—to get "a share of the action" or at a minimum to act as veto groups in the system. The full thrust of community organization may have been blunted in these last couple of years, but it would be foolish to ignore what may yet be one of the great structural changes in the political system of American urban society.

The patterns of communal life

Going back sixty years or more—there has been an extensive network of participation by different kinds of groups in the communal life of New York City, and these have tied into the political system in different ways. For purposes of analysis, one can identify three different kinds of communal systems in the city life.

The first might be called the *civic associations*. These are the old, established, predominantly upper middle class, business, and "good government" organizations. They include such groups as the Citizens Union (established in 1897 growing out of the City Reform Club whose members included Theodore Roosevelt and elected reform mayor William L. Strong), the Citizens Budget Commission

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(business-supported), the Citizens' Committee for Children (primarily wealthy, liberal Jewish women), the Men's and Women's City Clubs, the Civil Service Reform Association, the Public Education Association, the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, the Commerce and Industry Association, the League of Women Voters, etc. These are all politically-minded, politically active, "clean government," reform movements.

The second is the more numerous and more diffuse *fraternal and service organizations* built, traditionally, around the religious and ethnic groups. These consist of the Protestant Council, the Catholic Charities, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, the hospitals, family service centers, old age homes, child care centers, parochial schools, and the like. They are represented in the large, coordinating, research and information agencies, such as the Community Council of Greater New York, and in major service groups, such as the Community Service Society of New York. These agencies, plus the many "old country" associations, particularly among the Jews and the Irish, have provided the means whereby the poor immigrants of an earlier era were helped to settle in New York. These organizations have been the backbone of the communal, self-help structures of New York.

And third, there has been the large network of *neighborhood organizations:* settlement houses, parent-teachers associations, block associations, tenants associations, local churches and synagogues. The center of these activities was often the local political club. City aldermen, state assemblymen, and state senators kept in touch with these organizations which meant grievances or needs were funneled through the elected representatives.

In the past, almost all of these three "communal systems" were private and voluntary. They were sustained by the monies and time of individuals who gained status, political visibility, or simple personal satisfaction through these activities. They were maintained by professional staffs who provided the day-to-day services, as well as structural continuity through time, and who often "recruited" new leaders for these organizations in order to sustain the monies and activities.

In addition, the political system itself was the main "brokerage" agency for patronage, reward, wealth, status, and power. New immigrants could get jobs through "pull" at city hall or through the large number of business concerns whose existence depended in part on political favor; for example, Consolidated Edison, pier stevedore concerns, construction companies, and truckers. The quid pro quo was jobs for votes.[1] The political clubs serviced the new and un-

[1] How far back all this goes can be seen from the entries in the diaries of George Templeton Strong, stalwart of the New York Bar, trustee of Columbia College, and a founder of the Columbia Law School in 1856, whose diaries over a forty

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organized poor (on the lower east side before World War I, it was not uncommon for a person who had an appendicitis attack, to go to his precinct captain, because he often didn't know where the hospital was, and he certainly did not have a telephone). They told city hall what was needed in the neighborhoods. In the current jargon, the political clubs were the chief modes of communication and control.

Over the past decades, the political machines that were the structure of government in New York have broken down. Under the New Deal, the locus of power and attention shifted to Washington, and the major jobs and finances of the society came under federal control. The rise of middle class liberal reformers within the Democratic Party—reform, previously, had always operated outside the party, usually in some "fusion" slate—cracked the singular power of the old bosses because the reform clubs were oriented more to issues than to jobs. The extension of the merit system in the 1960's, "upward, outward and downward," reduced the role of patronage. More and more frequently, administrators of the top agencies came from career ranks and party background almost became a mark of disqualification. As Theodore Lowi observed, "The triumph of Reform really ends in paradox: *Cities like New York become well-run but ungoverned.*"[2]

In the past thirty years, the influx of Negro and Puerto Rican migrants brought a double problem. They lacked the resources and often the will to build voluntary community structures. They arrived on the scene at a time when the older political mechanisms were in disarray. The blacks did achieve some political power, with the votes of Harlem as a base. When Hulan Jack became borough president in Manhattan in 1953, it became clear that for the foreseeable future this post would be a black prerogative. (And so it has been with his successors, Constance Motley and Percy Sutton.) But the other rewards —political contracts, the protection of rackets, the patronage to the lawyers and professionals—that had gone in the past to the ethnic minorities did not follow this political power: in part, because such rewards were no longer available and, in part, because there were few blacks able to claim them. The chief point here is that the blacks lacked the communal network that could interact with the political

year period remain one of the great sources of social history of New York. On November 6, 1838, Strong notes in his diary: "It was enough to turn a man's stomach—to make a man adjure republicanism forever—to see the way they were naturalizing this morning at the Hall. Wretched, filthy bestial-looking Italians and Irish, and creations that looked as if they had risen from the lazarettos of Naples for this especial object; in short, the very scum and dregs of human nature filled the clerk of Common Pleas office so completely that I was almost afraid of being poisoned by going in."

[2] Theodore Lowi, "Machine Politics—Old and New," *The Public Interest*, No. 9 (Fall 1967).

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base, and thus provide the basis for the kind of advancement that had been made by earlier ethnic groups.[3]

It has always been the case in modern society, that the three fundamental hierarchies are power, wealth, and status. In the past, wealth commanded power or power commandeered wealth. But for the ethnic groups in the United States, these two were reinforced through the *communal* structures, which provided status and prestige for the wealthy and powerful, and which also provided a cohesion for the group coming into the society.[4] The communal structures set up a network of full-time professionals who would advance the interests of the ethnic groups and their activities furthered and reinforced the contacts and social ties which aided the lawyer, the businessman, the financier in their business and professional careers.

The problem for the blacks, thus, was that at the time they were coming into urban life the political base was restricted and their communal structures were weak. In time, the two weaknesses would doubtless have been corrected. It is only in the last decade, after all, that the blacks have become primarily urban and concentrated in the north. But time is no longer available. What took the Irish three generations, the Italian two, and the Jews one to achieve—the security of middle class status—is something the blacks want immediately. They have been here the longest, and have been held down the most. They no longer want to wait. What they are asking for is power and resources; these have to come through the community.

The diremption of the cities

To this political and sociological crisis is added another crucial fact: the multiplication of social problems arising from the demographic transformation of the country. The population of the country is being concentrated in metropolitan areas, the older sections of the

[3] In Chicago, the political structure is still sufficiently strong to serve as an integrative mechanism. Negroes coming into Bronzeville (the long central strip on the south side in which blacks are congregated) are met by the local precinct captain who provides services, information and job leads, in exchange for votes. For in Chicago, the political machines are still operative. (To reverse the Lowi paradox, Chicago is governed, but not well-run.) The rackets, and the revenues derived from them, are still intertwined with the machines, and unlike Harlem, the major black political organization in Chicago has a monopoly on the rackets in the black areas.

[4] In most societies, the status system was transmitted through "family," and "old families" were at the top of status hierarchies. The family system was joined to the economic enterprise and provided continuity through inheritance. In the more fluid society of the U.S., particularly for immigrant groups, the family system could not as easily fulfill this function, and status was achieved largely through holding office in the communal organizations; among the Jews, for example, through positions in the temple, the community center, welfare fund, hospital, "defense" organizations such as the American Jewish Committee or the B'nai Brith, etc.

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cities are dilapidated, the transportation systems are choked and swollen, and services are lagging. It is easy, and deceptive, to blame this simply on "capitalism," or, more ambiguously on "the system." But this crisis derives in the first instance from one of the most fundamental facts about modern society: *the increase in number and movement of persons, and the increased demand for a level of services and amenities for all which has been hitherto unknown in the society*. Sixty-five years ago, a million persons a year could pour into the country in a steady stream for a decade, and jam together in crowded ghettoes, with little direct impact on the settled middle class lives of the older inhabitants, but that is no longer possible today. Each person wants full access to education and to services; and today each middle class person, sitting in his car, among 80 million others, wants a free and unobstructed highway.

These demands for services underscore what has been evident for a long time: that the administrative structure of the cities, organized as they are in a crazy-quilt pattern of counties, townships, and districts, are out of whack with the times. The United States may have the most modern economy and technology in the world, but its administrative structure, as Samuel Huntington has observed, is a Tudor polity. This is particularly evident in New York. The population of New York *City* (not of the metropolitan region) is *twice* the population of Norway, and is greater than the population of Austria or Sweden. But the city's political structure is wholly incongruent with the social realities. The mayor almost has to keep in touch with every birth, briss, confirmation, wedding, national day, death, and memorial service of the multifarious nationality groups in the city in his ceremonial duties; but in his administrative role, the mayor is unable to be in control of the day-to-day functions of the city or to determine its long-range plannning requirements.

In 1947, the Citizens Union proposed the division of New York City into districts "for more orderly planning and decentralization of municipal services and community development." The report recommended the grouping of city services in one location in each district, and proposed that each district would develop its own plan in cooperation with the City Planning Commission. In 1950, the City Planning Commission took up the idea and proposed 66 districts as "logical units for the planning of schools, housing, hospitals, libraries, playgrounds, local street systems and other public facilities as well as for consideration of land use and zoning patterns." As Borough President of Manhattan in 1951, Robert Wagner set up a Community Planning Council, consisting of 15 to 20 members, for each of the 12 Manhattan districts suggested by the City Planning Commission. In part, Wagner did this, because the local political clubs that had been the source of information and mediation between the districts and the city had largely ceased to function, and the admin-

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istrative agencies increasingly were being overwhelmed by the local groups who took their claims and grievances directly to the city heads. Through these Local Planning Boards, Wagner sought to set up a mediating mechanism against the anarchic onslaught of the multiple organizations in the city.

Thus, the idea of decentralization and local community organizations as the basis of new administrative and political functions was underway, slowly, haltingly, and confusedly, in the 1950's.

To this the Kennedy administration added a new ideology, the ideology of "participation." The upsurge of the blacks, the discovery of the poor, the argument that these groups could not help themselves because they were powerless, all led to the conception that in programs fostered by goverment one should encourage the creation of new communities. In this way, new structures could be built that could provide help and training for the poor through institutions under their control or influence. In these communities, new, indigenous leaderships would emerge who would lead their constituents "into" the society. Thus the groundwork was laid for a change in the structure of American urban life, a transformation fostered by and financed by the federal government. It is a story unique in American history.

The ideology of participation

The heart of the participation ideology was the Poverty Program, and the section entitled the Community Action Programs (CAP) which provide for participation by the poor in the programs that will affect their lives. The key phrase in the section was "maximum feasible participation," a phrase which for some was rhetoric, for some ideology, and for some an instrumental means whereby the poor would gain a sense of political identity. As Daniel P. Moynihan observes, "Community action with citizen participation was a coherent and powerful idea working its way into national policy, albeit little noticed or understood at the time."

One of the earliest pamphlets produced by CAP, entitled "A Hometown Fight," sets forth this idea in its instructions to communities on how to apply for community-action grants:

> Local community action programs are central to the war on poverty. . . . The individual community decides how best to attack poverty in its midst. Initiative and direction must come from the community itself. . . . In a community with limited resources, local leaders can begin a community action program in stages. For example, with the 'building block' approach a community might start a child development program including health services. . . . The major goal of community action programs is to help individuals help themselves.

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The assumptions behind these propositions were quite clear. As John G. Wofford indicates, "There was to be no federal blueprint, no magic formula worked out in Washington that would be imposed on local problems. . . . Problems of decaying mining towns in Kentucky, of Indian reservations, of rural Mississippi, and of urban slums were seen as too different to permit meaningful detailed federal direction." There was also a more important reason, as Mr. Wofford details it:

> Planning itself was seen as a form of action. The very process of getting communities to think about their problems was viewed as an essential means of mobilizing local resources most of which had been either unused or diffused in the past. In communities throughout the country, at the time of the enactment of the anti-poverty legislation, most programs dealing with local poverty were 'single-tracked.' School boards, city halls, departments of welfare, juvenile courts, settlement houses, were going their separate ways without significant contact with each other. The person who suffered programmatic insularity was, of course, the poor person himself; his problems were segmented into traditional molds, and he was rarely, if ever, viewed as one human being with connected crises, needs and styles of life. Thus 'linkage' of programs at the local level became an important goal, and the local planning needed to develop these linkages was conceived as the first and one of the most important forms of community action.[5]

While the rationale and intentions of the "participation" idea are clear, the political history of its emergence and realization is still somewhat of a mystery. The Wagner Act had behind it a large social movement, a long history of agitation, and a political ideology. The Community Action Program had none of these. It was initiated almost completely from the "top," by professionals, rather than by the poor, and on the basis of a mystique of participation.[6]

Much of the original push in this direction came from the Ford Foundation through the proddings of its public affairs director, Paul Ylvisaker, a former philosophy professor at Swarthmore. In the 1950's, American communities had little awareness of the huge problems ahead. Urban renewal, which had been initiated by the Housing Act of 1949, had brought physical change to the center of the cities, but the social changes, particularly the displacement of the poor, were largely ignored. Through Ylvisaker, the Ford Foundation "Gray

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[5] "The Politics of Local Responsibility," in James Sundquist, ed., *On Fighting Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1969). This volume, and its companion *On Understanding Poverty,* edited by Daniel P. Moynihan, derive from a seminar on the Origins of the Poverty Program sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

[6] Daniel P. Moynihan, "The Professionalization of Reform," *The Public Interest,* No. 1 (Fall 1965).

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Areas" programs gave substantial grants to cities to set up community agencies in such fields as youth employment, education, and community services. Ylvisaker had no specific program for social reform—the very idea went against his grain—but he believed in the method of self-help through which communities could bring forth programs suitable to their needs.

A very different source of the participation ideology was a group that had gathered around Robert Kennedy when he was Attorney-General. Kennedy had become concerned with the growing extent of youth crime and he had set up a President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime, actually an interagency team from the departments of Labor, Justice, and Health, Education and Welfare, directed by David Hackett, a close friend. This committee accepted a theory of delinquency that had been advanced by two sociologists from the Columbia University School of Social Work, Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, a theory derived from Robert Merton's hypothesis of the relation between "social structure and *anomie*." Delinquency, they argued, is not an individual pathology, to be "cured" by psychiatric or social work therapies. Lower class youths, they said, do have conventional goals (e.g., success), but face a disparity between what "they are led to want and what is actually available to them." Delinquency then, is an illegitimate means of achieving what the society prescribes. In the formal language of the two sociologists, "delinquency is not . . . a property of individuals . . . it is a property of social systems in which these individuals and groups are enmeshed." The major task, therefore, for those who wish to eliminate delinquency must be to reorganize the slums and to create new "functional substitutes for traditional structures." In short, one must provide the slum youngsters with realistic opportunities for social mobility, and to do this one has to create, not just jobs, but a whole new way of life, a new community.

This theory was translated into practice in Mobilization for Youth, a project on the lower east side of New York. By 1963, to cite Sundquist, "the work of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime had become 'a $30 million test of Ohlin's opportunity theory.'" The MFY demonstration included employment programs, work preparation, evaluation and guidance, skills training, antidiscrimination activities, remedial education, home visits, and neighborhood service centers. More importantly, the Cloward and Ohlin theories about community action, and Ylvisaker's faith in the efficacy of experiment as the means whereby community goals would emerge out of experience and self-organization (a quixotic fusion of John Dewey and Quaker philosophy), became the ideology of the Kennedy-Johnson antipoverty program and the basis of a putative "participation revolution" in American politics.

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The intention to change

There is no legislative history as to the meaning and intent of Congress in providing for maximum feasible involvement of the poor in the Economic Opportunity Act's definition of "community action." Adam Yarmolinsky, one of the legislative drafters of the act, recalls that, "the requirement of 'maximum feasible participation' was incorporated into the language of the bill from its very first draft; but it was thought of simply as the process of encouraging the residents of poverty areas to take part in the work of community action programs and to perform a number of jobs that might otherwise be performed by professional social workers. . . . The possibility of major conflict between the organized poor and the politicians in city hall was simply not one that anybody worried about during this period, although Shriver and his associates did see the possibility of conflicts between city hall and the poverty community on the one side and the organized social work hierarchy on the other side."[7]

But this vague intention did contain an implicit commitment. As Wofford puts it, the "key—and often unstated—objective of the Community Action Program [was] institutional change." And, as Leonard Chazen, in a study of the act (in the *Yale Law Journal*, March 1966) writes: "section 202 (a) (3) . . . has been commonly interpreted as a mandate for federal assistance in the effort to create political organizations for the poor."

None of this was "planned" by social scientists. It was implicit in the intention of the Great Society to include the poor and the blacks into the society, just as the New Deal had included labor and the farmers. As James L. Sundquist writes, in summing up the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Project: "The decision to set the new and revolutionary institution in the midst of every American community, all at once, was made not by social theorists but by politicians—or, more precisely, their speech writers. The key word that ordained all that followed was neither 'maximum,' 'feasible,' nor 'participation,' but 'unconditional' from President Johnson's declaration of 'unconditional war on poverty.' That set the tone from which there could be no retreat. That this would mean the organization of the poor for a frontal assault on the power structure in city after city—merging inevitably into racial conflict—was not planned by those who wrote the language of the Economic Opportunity Act any more than it was foreseen by those who accepted and enacted it."

What some of the social scientists only dimly sensed quickly became a reality: that for the indigenous leaders of the poor, partic-

[7] "The Beginnings of O.E.O.," in the Sundquist volume, *op. cit.*

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ularly the militant blacks, the movement for "participation" became a drive for "power." This challenge was aimed at the local political machines, and was correctly understood as such by the local politicos. In San Francisco, black leaders succeeded early in 1965 in taking over control of the Poverty Program, and they sought to use the program to build a political base for black control. Plans were laid to have a part-time community organizer for almost every block and a full-time organizer for every eight blocks. Little of the monies went into services for the residents. In the political struggle within the black community, and between it and city hall, the original black leaders lost out. In Philadelphia, a program dominated by independent blacks was pulled back to city hall influence, though not with total city hall control. In New York City, the situation was reversed. The Poverty Program was used by the Lindsay administration to build a new political base by putting the black militants on the community action payrolls, tying them in with the Urban Action Task Forces, and using them as a battering ram against the older political machines.

Whatever the political outcome, the fact remains that a new institutional structure began to be built into the American political system. The question whether local community groups will *control* particular programs—schools, health, housing—is still being fought out. But the *participation* of the community is no longer in doubt. The Johnson administration felt that the Poverty Program had gone too far; but in setting up the Model Cities program it realized that little could be done without community participation, and that act stipulates that local community groups have to be consulted in the drawing up of new neighborhood plans. (Mindful of the experience of the Poverty Program, it provides that the control and final decisions over the plans are to be lodged in the mayor's office and in city hall.) The Nixon administration has chosen to expand the Model Cities program, rather than the Poverty Program, as its instrument for the basis of a coherent urban policy, and the participation of the local community will be further institutionalized under that scheme. How far and how effective the "community revolution" will be in American political life, remains to be seen. In the remainder of this essay we shall explore the extent of that change, as it has become manifest in New York City, and raise some questions about the meanings and extent of "community participation" for the political structure of the society.

The community revolution in New York

The "community revolution" has been more extensive—and, one might say, explosive—in New York than in any other city in the

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United States. The reasons for this lie largely in the inchoate nature of the political system of the city.

First, as we have noted earlier, there was a receptivity to the idea of decentralization, and this had led to the establishment of local planning boards in Manhattan and the demarcation of planning districts in other boroughs.

Second, there was strong ideological support for the creation of local community structures, both from the reform elements and from the liberal establishment in the city, particularly the foundations. Depending on the ideological position one holds, one can describe these efforts as either helping the blacks to full citizenship, or as "cooling" a tense and heated situation (particularly after the rioting in Watts and Newark), as (as the SDS puts it) a "counter-insurgency" tactic by McGeorge Bundy to blunt a revolutionary upsurge by the exploited. However one depicts the motive, the fact is that a number of the "activist" foundations (Ford, Taconic, New World) financed a significant number of community demonstration projects in different parts of the city. The two most contentious were the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school districts and the I.S. 201 complex in Harlem. These two educational efforts were given a high degree of autonomy by the Board of Education and, until the teachers strikes, had come under considerable "community control."

A third, and somewhat different, impetus were the decisions by Kennedy and Lindsay to cultivate the blacks and the poor in order to create a new political base as against the older dilapidated machines. Kennedy, aided by wealthy Wall Street friends, such as André Meyer of Lazard Frères, set up a corporation in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant district to help rehabilitate the neighborhood and he brought in a former Justice Department assistant, John Doar, to head up this effort. Through the Poverty Program and the Urban Action Task Forces, Lindsay built an extensive network of contacts in the ghettos, and put a large number of street leaders on the Human Resources Administration payroll.

Encouraged by these attentions, but in greater measure arising out of the new upsurge of black militancy, a large number of new, indigenous leaders emerged in the neighborhoods to play a role as community activists. What they quickly discovered is that their ability to "holler" and to threaten violence would give them, if not control, then at least a veto over government projects in their neighborhoods. Thus, the rise of CORE in Harlem, or the Afro-American Teachers Association, or the dozens of other new organizations, became a fourth dimension in the community revolution.

But behind all this there is the simple fact that in every major area which touches on the lives of people, especially in social services, the prevailing federal legislation now calls for community participation, and in New York, because of the political climate and

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official encouragement, the community movement has spilled over into more areas than in any other city in the country.

Nine community systems

Despite the importance and proliferation of the community efforts, the extraordinary fact is that nowhere in the city administration is there a single office which keeps track of all the community and neighborhood programs, coordinates the information about (let alone the overlapping jurisdictions of) these programs, or maintains a register of community leaders in each neighborhood and in each program, in order to assess the representativeness of the participation.

From what we have been able to piece together, there are nine different "community systems" in the city—nine areas, each comprising a number of different programs in which "the community" is supposed to have a voice. The nine are:

¶ Planning. On March 1, 1968, the City Planning Commission adopted a map delineating 62 community planning districts. (It would be difficult to say that these districts follow historic boundaries or encompass the politically or sociologically identifiable neighborhoods—a point we shall consider later.) Twelve of these districts are in Manhattan, 14 in the Bronx, 18 in Brooklyn, 14 in Queens, and 4 in Staten Island. The Planning Boards, which are mandated in the City Charter, counsel each Borough President on needs and facilities in each district. These boards are largely advisory and have few powers. Yet in any further movement to decentralize administrative functions of the city, it is possible that these districts would become, as in the case of the London County Councils, the basis of new political functions. For this reason, many persons have been concerned about the boundaries of the districts.

¶ Community Development. This is the euphemism for the Poverty Program. Under the jurisdiction of the Human Resources Administration—one of the ten new "super" agencies in the city—there is a city-wide Council Against Poverty made up of 51 persons, half of whom are representatives of local poverty areas, and there are 25 Community Corporations, one-third of whose members are elected by the poor in each district. The Community Corporations, the heart of the program, are supposed to organize a comprehensive set of services, adapted to local needs, (e.g., community action bureaus to work for better housing and more jobs, child care centers, youth programs), and to administer these programs.

¶ Health. Health Districts have long been a feature of the city and the demographic data from Health Districts as well as from census tracts form the basis for nearly all the social statistics in the city. In 1940, the New York City Health Department adopted a

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master plan to attain units of manageable size for health services. The city was divided into 30 Health Districts, each one having roughly equal units of 250,000 population. Each district was then subdivided into smaller units, known as Health Areas, each with about 25,000 population. In recent years, because of the revolution in medical practice—e.g., the extraordinary decline in virus diseases —there has been a new emphasis on "community medicine." Large hospitals have established extensive community service agencies. A major impetus, however, has come from the Kennedy bill requirement of community participation in the new mental health programs. Thus, in addition to local groups that work with the city's Municipal Health Centers, Community Mental Health Advisory Boards are presently being established. The creation of these community boards has led to a new kind of conflict between "the community" and the "professionals."

¶ Housing and Urban Renewal. Since 1962 the Housing and Development Administration consults with a community urban renewal council when it designates an area for urban renewal. Last year this policy was made national and mandatory by a Department of Housing and Urban Development administrative directive. Each renewal council is the judge of its own membership. The Morningside Urban Renewal Council, for example, has 60 membership organizations ranging from local churches, institutions, tenants associations, all the way over to the SDS. Renewal councils are funded by the city and provide legal and other services for persons affected by urban renewal. Because an urban renewal plan is often the main instrument for the reorganization of a neighborhood, the question of who is "the community" comes into its sharpest focus in these council debates. There are local groups participating in renewal activities in 20 areas.

¶ Model Cities. To a considerable extent, the Model Cities program supersedes urban renewal, and is designed to provide a comprehensive overhaul of a limited number of selected areas, concentrating new housing, rehabilitation, and various services for maximum impact. Under the law, any Model Cities program has to be worked out in conjunction with community groups, and in the three areas designated by New York as Model City areas, the processes of consultation that are being worked out are very much in flux.

¶ Police. For many minority persons, the police is the "enemy." Only about 7 per cent of the police in New York City are black, a figure that has changed little in the past decade. Yet, even the police are involved in community relations programs. The Police Athletic League is an effort, now over 50 years old, to create neighborhood athletic teams. Since 1966, Police Precinct Councils made up of local residents have been meeting with police representatives to discuss community problems in the 76 Police Precincts.

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¶ Youth Services. A wide variety of programs are aimed today at youth in the city, though there is no central coordinating agency. These touch on such matters as career development, vocational training, recreational facilities, and narcotics addiction. In each of these instances, programs are set up in neighborhoods and involve some community advisory boards.

¶ Urban Action Task Force. The Task Forces are primarily communication and "cooling" devices. The idea evolved after the East New York (Brooklyn) disorders in the summer of 1966, when the neighborhood Task Force was set up to identify local leaders, to establish contact, to hear grievances, and to funnel complaints to appropriate city agencies. When disorders have threatened, the Task Force has been able to enlist local leaders to "cool" a situation. There are now 22 neighborhood Task Forces, both in low income and middle class neighborhoods. Each is headed by a city official and has 2 staff members from the community, paid for by the city.[8] Along with the Task Forces, the Lindsay administration has set up 5 "Neighborhood City Halls," usually in a storefront, to receive complaints. Last year, 71,000 complaints were handled by these offices. The offices use city personnel but are financed by foundations and private individuals, because the Democratic-controlled city council has nullified all budget requests on the ground that the mayor was trying to use city funds to establish his own type of political clubhouse.

¶ Schools. Local School Boards have been in existence in New York since early in the century, but typically such boards were without power and consisted of local luminaries nominated by the political clubs. When the issue of integration and busing became salient, local feeling began to run high, and local groups began to pay attention to the schools. Since 1962, members of the Local School Boards have been screened by panels of local parent and community organizations and appointed by the Board of Education. More recently the issue of the "community control" of schools has become the most fractious political issue in New York. Under the decentralization plan passed by the New York State legislature in 1969, the city will be divided into 30-33 School Districts each having a Local School Board elected by proportional representation. Although the central board retains the power to employ and assign teachers, the local boards will have some influence in the choice of principals,

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[8] If one looks at the typical services of a neighborhood Task Force, it is clear that it is performing the functions of an old-style political club or the kind of services which an aggressive councilman could provide. The Flushing-Bayside task force, for example, is headed by a Deputy Commissioner of Public Events; it has arranged programs for elderly citizens, provided for five traffic lights in the area, helped support a summer day camp for children, worked to extend the size of some nursery schools, helped set up a playground in Pomonok Houses, and cleaned up Alley Pond Park.

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and boards in disadvantaged communities will have some power to select special teachers who they think may be effective.[9]

In all these areas, as we said, "the community" is supposed to be involved. But what does this mean? We can try to gauge what participation means, in practice, by considering two programs, Poverty and the Model Cities.

The Poverty Program

Although the idea of community participation may have been launched in the Poverty Program somewhat inadvertently, its career is by now quite deliberately molded. A significant number of persons have acquired a stake in its future and do their best to swell its tide. A significant number of others fear the consequences of the escalation of demands upon the political system, to which community participation contributes, and would like to curb its rise. By now, the latter intent is probably futile and possibly dangerous. As Jeremy Bentham noted long ago, it is psychologically harder to lose than simply not to gain, and as the urban poor have almost acquired the status of having something to lose, they are not about to give it away quietly.

The question is no longer *whether* but *how* to involve "the community" in the processes of decision; and officials, planners, reformers, and politicians now vie with one another in claiming that their programs and methods achieve the most and the best of that elusive attribute, participation. There is widespread recognition that once the original phases of dramatic chaos and exciting turmoil have been outgrown, the militant young hotheads often do not participate in the developed processes of participation—the meetings between community groups and government officials, the public hearings, the elections for local boards, the consultations and deliberations. But there is also a growing recognition that, in providing the possibilities for meaningful participation, the supports on which the militants erect their rhetoric are weakened. "The difference between us and them," said a well-dressed, hard-working black poverty program official in his thirties, "is ten years. We used to think, too, that the only thing to do was to tear it down, but now we're trying to change the system from the inside, and sometimes we think there's a chance."

The Poverty Program's claim to have developed a significant degree of participation by the inhabitants of the ghetto in the planning and operation of services designed to help them is a fair one. In some ways New York City has gone further than most other cities;

[9] Almost all the public attention has been centered on the elementary and secondary schools in the city, but a state law also sets up "community education districts" to deal with vocational training and "upgrading" of learning of school dropouts and adults. Control of these programs has been a political issue as well.

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25 of the 51-member city-wide Council Against Poverty (set up in September 1966) are representatives of the poor who are selected by the 25 communities designated by the city as poverty areas. On the Council Against Poverty are also 17 public officials, including the Mayor, Borough Presidents, the Superintendent of Schools and the Administrator of the Housing and Development Administration. Nine seats represent labor, business, religious, racial, and civic groups designated by the mayor as eligible to send a representative. Council Against Poverty sets priorities among antipoverty efforts, gives final approval to program grants using both city and federal funds, and supervises the setting up of what are called—one does not yet know whether the term is unfortunate or instructive—local "Community Corporations." In New York City, one-third of the members of Community Corporation boards must be directly elected by the poor; two-thirds of the members must be residents of the area; and, in most plans, one-third of the members must be, in the literal sense, poor—that is, have incomes below the poverty line. The Community Corporations screen and recommended program requests and operate programs or subcontract for them with "delegate agencies" at an even more local level. Twenty-five Community Corporations have now been formed.

The numbers of poor people who have taken part in the elections for these boards are not large, and are sometimes cited as percentages of the total inhabitants of an area to discredit the reality of participation: 5,276 voters out of a total Bedford-Stuyvesant population of 250,000, and 3,991 out of 190,000 residents of East Harlem, are not high percentages, although the numbers of eligible voters who take part in these elections sometimes run as high as 10 per cent.[10] The more significant issue is how these levels of participation compare with whatever participation existed before, and here the picture is more impressive. Participation in the Poverty Program has involved much more than mere reshuffling—the reorganization of people already caught up in the block associations and parent organizations into new groups. It has drawn in many new members, and propelled them through its processes to a point where a sanitation worker from Bedford-Stuyvesant chairs a Council Against Poverty committee on which some of the highest officials of the city government sit.

What has not always been anticipated is that the more the community is drawn into the process of consultation, participation, and advocacy of its own interests, the closer it may come to demanding that it be the final authority as well as a source *for* its own programs, able to summon outside funds and expert advice, but maintaining

[10] Typically, in many towns, the "slide-off" in voting, from national Presidential elections to local contests, is from 50-60 per cent in the former to 15-20 per cent in the latter.

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the most prized and constantly sought power—the final say. When one set of persons moves closer to power, however, another set is displaced; and the Poverty Program's early efforts to achieve the specified "maximum feasible participation" by organizing the poor to pressure the politicians has led to an inevitable reluctance on the part of those in the established structures to be shouted at or bypassed. The result has been a compromise. In 1967 Congress amended the original Economic Opportunity Act to require that one-third of the membership of bodies allocating Poverty Program funds consist of public officials.

In New York City, efforts to combat poverty are coordinated through the Human Resources Administration, which includes a large number of operating agencies. Through its Department of Social Services, it disburses welfare payments to more than a million persons. The Manpower and Career Development Agency operates 20 Neighborhood Manpower Service Centers which provide job recruitment and counseling services. The Community Development Agency handles the antipoverty efforts, but is subject to policies that are determined by the Council Against Poverty.

This year, apart from the $1.3 billion spent on the payment and administration of welfare and medical assistance to welfare recipients, $155 million is being spent on programs for 1 million poor people: $70 million through the Community Development Agency, $54 million through the Manpower and Career Development Agency, the rest through smaller agencies that deal with such problems as drug addiction.

In all, city and federal antipoverty funds finance 1,000 delegate agencies operating more than 250 all-year and 1,000 summer programs. Some of the 1,000 delegate agencies are long-established organizations, such as the YMHA, the Urban League, United Neighborhood Houses, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, etc.; but most of them are newer, strictly local organizations developed and run by residents for the poor from their neighborhoods.[11]

More than 14,300 persons are employed by the antipoverty program in New York City. Of these, 400 are on the central staff of the Community Development Agency, but 80 per cent of the 13,900

[11] For example, the Poverty Program pays for some 200 store front centers operated by welfare groups in New York. A typical one, as reported in the *New York Times,* is the United Welfare League in a storefront at 105th Street and Columbus Avenue. Its rent and personnel are paid for by funds from the Office of Economic Opportunity. Its field director is Mrs. Sydelle Moore who went from being on welfare to her present job. One of her jobs is to bring people to welfare. "We go through the buildings on the west side, knocking on doors, talking to people in their rooms, finding out if they need help. We've located a lot of people who needed welfare but who wouldn't have been found dead in a welfare center," she said. "We tell them about the Social Welfare Law. We let them know what their legitimate rights are, and we help them get through the intake process. . . ." She has more than 3,500 cases in her file.

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others who work in the poor communities are local residents. The Human Resources administrator, Mitchell Ginsberg, proudly claims that 80 per cent of New York City's local initiative programs "are run by grassroots, nontraditional social agencies; in Los Angeles, it's 54 per cent, Chicago 10 per cent and Detroit 2 per cent."

This has also led to considerable confusion, and, in a number of instances, as federal audits have shown, to a considerable number of financial defalcations and embezzlements by free wheeling local entrepreneurs. "Honest graft," as George Washington Plunkitt once called it, was the price of Tammany Hall for its services. As Mitchell Ginsberg phrases it in the locutions of social work, "inasmuch as one of the primary goals of the community action program is to give community people the opportunity to learn the ways of organized effort and to thus enter the mainstream of society, they must be allowed to learn by doing."

Brownsville

What is a poverty "community" and how does it "participate"? Of New York City's 25 poverty communities, some have as many inhabitants as Pasadena or Salt Lake City. The lines that have been drawn encompass as few as 18,000 and as many as 300,000 persons, but each area is high in what are taken to be the most significant indices of poverty: total persons receiving welfare per 1,000 population, per cent of live births in hospital wards, and juvenile delinquency offenses per 1,000 youths between the ages of 7 and 20. Compared to a city-wide average of 61.0 persons per 1,000 receiving welfare in 1965, east Harlem, for instance, had 182.0 and Morrisania, in the Bronx, 196.4. Compared to a city-wide average of 48.4 per cent of births in hospital wards, central Harlem had 93.2 per cent and Bushwick, in Brooklyn, 73.2 per cent. Central Harlem had 112.2 juvenile delinquency offenses per 1,000 youths between the ages of 7 and 20, and Bedford-Stuyvesant 123.6, compared to an average of 52.2 for the whole of New York City.

As Raleigh Davenport, the Staff Director of the Council Against Poverty explains, poverty area lines "determine which organizations and individuals are eligible to receive, respectively, money and services. . . . It should not be surprising, then, that a great deal of interaction [sic!] . . . preceded the maps" which defined New York City's poor communities.

Brownsville, in central Brooklyn, is one New York City poverty community. Once a well-known Jewish area, its population of 150,000 in 1960 was 32.5 per cent black, 21 per cent Puerto Rican. Now its somewhat higher population is approximately 65 per cent black and 30 per cent Puerto Rican. About half of the people in Brownsville are on welfare. It was the first poverty area to set up a Community

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Corporation, the plans for which were drawn up by 94 preexisting groups, such as block associations, church groups, and parent associations. Its Community Corporation now coordinates 26 programs, and allocates nearly $3 million of antipoverty funds. Among the programs are a Consumer Education Program that teaches low income and welfare consumers how to shop efficiently, and promotes a credit union to encourage savings and the development of a consumer cooperative; a Family Planning Unit; a Mental Health Project that involves whole families; and the Brownsville Young Troupers that draws young people between the ages of 6 and 21 into the performing arts, social activities, and sports. Trouper membership grew from 172 in 1964 to 589 in 1968.

Brownsville now has 9,000 persons registered to vote in the special elections for Community Corporation representatives. Three open hearings a month, between September 1968 and January 1969, on a master plan for Brownsville gave the members of the community a chance to air their complaints. According to Paul Cooper, the director of the Brownsville Community Corporation, between 50 and 150 people attended these meetings, nearly all of them new participants at each meeting. The Corporation's open meetings are efficiently conducted, and parliamentary procedures generally prevail over emotional outpourings. At a recent meeting, candidates were presented for the unpaid offices on the Local Governing Boards in 5 areas of Brownsville to which the BCC will delegate various responsibilities. Beneath the surface were the tensions without which politics would not be what it is; but at the suggestion that the residents of Brownsville are tired of having the people in Washington making plans for this community, there was loud and universal applause.

Model cities

The road to participation is, of course, not as straight as some advocates of the war on poverty have presented it. Because community participation threatened to develop into a drive for community control, a different mode was devised within the Model Cities program. There it is emphasized that participation does *not* mean control, and when a New York City Model Cities Neighborhood Director is pressed to discuss how the line is drawn for the Model Cities program, he repeats his most carefully chosen words, "It is the *Mayor's* program."

The federal Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act was passed in 1966. In New York City an executive order by the mayor in 1967 set up a Model Cities Committee composed of the Director of City Planning as chairman, the Director of the Budget, and four other persons including the HRA administrator and the acting chairman of the Council Against Poverty. Mrs. Eugenia Flatow,

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a former co-leader of the reform Riverside Democrat Club, became executive secretary.

Three areas in the city, populated by some 900,000 residents, have been designated as Model Cities Neighborhoods and have received planning grants from the federal government's Housing and Urban Development agency. These are Central Brooklyn (including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and East New York), Harlem-East Harlem, and South Bronx (including parts of Mott Haven, Morrisania, and Hunts Point). Sixty-five million dollars were set aside for these three areas, $28.8 million of it for Central Brooklyn. Plans for the expenditure of the total $65 million were approved by HUD in June 1969, and HEW has made another $5 million available.

Although the Nixon administration has decided to spread the effort more evenly and more thinly, the Model Cities approach in New York has been to concentrate its efforts on a multiplicity of ills in a few selected areas. Planning proceeds under the rubrics of physical development, education, economic development, sanitation and safety, and multiservices. As Mrs. Flatow explains the guidelines under which the Model Cities program operates, existing city agencies are given "first crack" at getting accomplished what needs to be done—whether it be rehabilitating houses or improving police-community relations. But where an existing agency "cannot or will not" operate a needed program, Model Cities can and will develop and carry out alternative means.

Spelling this out in greater detail, staff members explain that if local residents want, more than anything else, to get the garbage service improved, the Model Cities staff will seek to circumvent the contract provisions whereby the city's sanitation workers refuse to go beyond the building line in front of which all garbage is to be placed—which leaves yards and alleys and vacant lots untouched. And if the local residents want the paying jobs involved, instead of hiring outsiders, Model Cities planners will try to devise a way to hire trucks and give the local people jobs as sanitation "assistants"—so that the sanitation "workers" will not call a city-wide strike to protest this threat to their job waiting lists and their prestige. Again, if the poor in Brooklyn express their opposition to outside builders from Queens constructing their projects, arrangements will be made to put aside the usual bidding requirements, demanded by the Comptroller's Office, in order to favor possibly less efficient local contractors, who will give jobs to local blacks and Puerto Ricans, many of whom will have tried, unsuccessfully, to join building and construction trades unions.

The furthest developed program so far is the one for Central Brooklyn. It calls for the expenditure of $188 million—by far the largest segment—on physical development alone to be funded from Model

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Cities funds, Title I funds, City Capital Budget, and "mortgage money." Its programs—70 in all—are described in terms of "long-range objectives, one year objectives, and five year objectives." Under the heading of physical development, the one year objective is initiate site acquisition to support 4,157 new housing units; let conto "start construction of 4,150 new dwelling units . . . assemble and struction contracts for about 20 per cent of these units." A one year job objective is to "employ at least 50 per cent minority workers in all building and maintenance projects in the area." The five year objective is to complete 70,000 new units. And since the area's residents prefer buildings no higher than five stories, this is the height stipulated. The five year objective for elementary and intermediate education is to "bring at least 70 per cent of school population up to grade level."

Inevitably, the relation between the city and the local community has involved tension. Efforts to bring Central Brooklyn community residents into Model Cities planning began in September, 1967. Elected officials, representatives of community boards, of planning committees, of civil rights organizations, of school groups and businesses were invited to a meeting. The more than 50 persons present selected a committee to screen candidates for the position of Neighborhood Director, and recommended Horace Morancie, a black, for the post. Lindsay appointed him. The committee also proposed the creation of three 25 member committees, one each for the 3 communities within the area. In February, 1968, information about the Model Cities program and election procedures for these area committees was mailed to over 800 organizations in the Central Brooklyn area; and in the following months, at meetings attended by from 250 to 700 persons, members of these committees were elected at meetings within each of the 3 communities.

Well aware of the vast mistrust felt by the poor towards city hall, Morancie has tried to temper the community's demands and at the same time to meet its accusations that he has "sold out." Speaking in the summer of 1968 to representatives of the community about his difficult role, he suggested that his head was on the block, and would be "chopped off downtown or here," unless the community got down to business. Half a year later, the plan for Central Brooklyn was complete. Although there had been many consultations with representatives of the community, the plan was essentially written downtown, by the "suspect powers" themselves.

But in the Harlem-East Harlem area, where open hearings were still in progress to allow residents to air their frustrations—and to make their dramatic appeals for understanding that "the poor are *people*"—there was, until a few weeks before the deadline for submission of a plan to HUD, no plan. Model Cities' staff members have persuaded some of those working on proposals that statements about

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middle class teachers profiting from the "educational genocide" of black children might be less effective in drawing funds to the area than softer phraseology, and local spokesmen for the "let's-get-on-with-the-job" middle were beginning to emerge, but resistance to the hand of "governmental bureaucracy" was still formidable.

In order not to forfeit the federal money at stake, the Lindsay administration rescinded some aspects of the participation process for Harlem-East Harlem and for the South Bronx areas, and proceeded with plans that could not be said to represent "what these communities wanted," especially not the extent of local control some members of them wanted.

The differences in approach have engendered some rivalry between the HRA and the Model Cities program. Some Model Cities staff members are not altogether displeased with the allegations of money mismanagement by the antipoverty agencies, while some HRA defenders doubt the sincerity of Model Cities' participation efforts.

The rivalry has been distinctly visible in Brownsville, where the local Community Corporation has charged it is being bypassed in the Model Cities planning and that its programs will be duplicated. The Model Cities Neighborhood Director has replied that much of the antagonism in the community toward anything emanating from government must be blamed on the antipoverty programs, which raised the expectations of so many that a breakthrough would occur, and which is seen now by many among the poor as mere appeasement.

On balance, what are the gains and what are the losses of participation? There is some dispute as to whether or not it actually lengthens the time required for action to be accomplished. Major Owens, head of the Community Development Agency, and an ardent advocate of participation, estimates that the benefits are worth the effort even though it "at least doubles the amount of time required to accomplish any task in the areas of planning, budgeting, and evaluation." Donald Elliott, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, claims that, in the long run, working with community groups shortens the time needed for planning urban renewal projects before construction can begin. To go ahead without participation, and then to meet strong opposition, causes the most serious delays. "Obviously," he says, "if the city is going to give community groups the responsibility to determine their own destiny, it has to allow them to resolve their own internal struggles. We have found that the community, when given the actual responsibility of having to resolve problems by themselves, solves them better without interference from the city administration."

One seasoned black participant admits with some sadness his conclusion that "leaders don't grow on trees," but he remains convinced

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that if efforts are to be more than temporary handouts, they must contribute to the organizing of the poor to assert themselves.

Some of the political problems that have arisen have been serious. There have been ugly battles over who truly represents whom, racial differences among the poor have been exacerbated, racial hatreds towards those with jobs and power have been inflamed, and the whole question of the effectiveness and wisdom of inciting the poor to pressure the politicians has been questioned by knowledgeable students of American society and by friends of the poor.

At a theoretical level, one might wish to assert that, if there were no costs involved in arriving at decisions, everyone should participate in every decision, even to the extent of yielding nothing involuntarily. James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, in their book *The Calculus of Consent,* have written that "if the costs of organizing decisions voluntarily should be zero, *all* externalities [i.e., disadvantages to persons] would be eliminated by voluntary private behavior of individuals. . . . There would, in this case, be no rational basis for state or collective action. . . . The choice between voluntary action, individual or cooperative, and political action, which must be collective, rests on the relative costs of organizing decisions, on the relative costs of social interdependence."

But in the real world the costs in time, energy, delay, and wasted funds, of decisions in which individuals talk out their differences and voluntarily arrive at agreement, can be very high. And the more numerous the individuals participating in the deliberations, the higher such costs become. The less justifiable these costs for a given kind of issue appear to be, the more attractive becomes the alternative of imposing a decision from above, by a federal or city bureaucracy. But there the costs are hidden by administrative procedures and by the seeming "efficiency" of issuing decrees or plans by fiat. Such procedures do not gain consent, and the virtues of a participatory scheme—despite the rancors and irrationalities it may engender —are that the final product is the work of those whose lives are affected by the decisions that are made.

The commitment to participation, it seems to us, is inescapable in the kind of multigroup society in which we live. The real sociological problem—and this is the set of issues to which we finally turn—is the definition of the participating unit itself—the neighborhood or community—and its relations with the other political and sociological entities in the society.

The boundaries of community

To sum up: two problems have emerged for city government in recent years, that of the decentralization of functions because of the unwieldy administrative structures, and the claims of community

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decision (particularly in the black areas) over these functions. The two are not necessarily the same. Decentralization, in most instances, as in government or corporate enterprise, means giving a high degree of autonomy to subordinate administrative *officials* within a centralized policy structure. Community decisions represents a political shift in the locus of control. In recent years, the two modes have become fused. Decentralization has come to mean community decisions and, as in the campaign program of Norman Mailer, the cry has even become "*all* power to the local neighborhoods." The difficulty with this slogan, so redolent of an earlier revolutionary time, is in the complication of defining a neighborhood both in communal and administrative terms.

A neighborhood becomes a community when there is a shared life and purpose built around local institutions. In New York, one can identify, historically, six overlapping types of neighborhoods. Traditionally, there are the neighborhoods built around kin and church, family life and synagogues. Religious buildings are the oldest symbol of community, and within a strange area they are the first marks of identification. Thus, there are the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish neighborhoods.

There are, second, the ethnic clusters, such as Polish, Irish, Italian, who even though all Catholic, still congregate among their own; as do, of course, German, Ukranian, Jewish, Chinese, etc. The distinctive food stores and specialty shops make these sections visible.

There are, third, subethnic clusters of a highly defined kind—the Hassidic Jews in Williamsburg, the Sephardic Jews in Bensonhurst, the West Indian Negroes in Harlem—who cling to each other even more tenaciously than do the larger ethnic groups of which they are a part, intermarry more frequently, engage in specialized crafts and occupations (diamonds for the Hassidim, embroidery for the Bensonhurst Sephardi) and maintain a high clannishness among themselves in distinct geographic districts.

There is, fourth, the segregation by income and class, as in the upper east side along Central Park, or in Brooklyn Heights or Riverdale.

Fifth, there is the neighborhood defined by function, such as the university enclave around Morningside Heights.

And, finally, there are the *quartiers* marked off by a distinct style of life, such as Greenwich Village or East Village, or, more numerous, yet less well known, the nieghborhoods of rooted middle class home ownership such as in Bay Ridge, east Flatbush, north Bronx or Staten Island, which, too, have a distinctive style of life.

Most of the "natural" neighborhoods of the city are in Brooklyn, north Bronx and the older sections of Queens and Staten Island. These are "natural" clusters, self-defined by individuals in relation to each other. The continual shifting about which takes place be-

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cause of upward social mobility, or changes in the life cycle (i.e., having small children, or children leaving home), tends to redefine neighborhoods, such as the departure of the Italians out of east Harlem into home ownership in the north Bronx, or the movement of the Germans out of Yorkville, the Irish from the west side, etc. But in the last twenty years this process has been distorted by a number of rigidities. Rent control has frozen movements which would have taken place under normal circumstances, such as keeping elderly persons and small families in large apartments along West End Avenue and Riverside Drive. More importantly, deliberate social policy, by the federal government and the city, has sought to mix income classes and neighborhoods by placing low income projects in high land-cost areas, or by mixing low income and middle income housing projects. The very act of beginning slum clearance during a tight housing shortage shortly after World War II, and locating these new projects in dense and high land-cost acquisition areas, wreaked further havoc. At that time, Nathan Straus, then housing administrator, proposed that any new low-cost housing be located in Staten Island, Queens, the north Bronx, and the outlying sections of the city. There, low rise, garden type developments could be built cheaply. But he was shouted down by political leaders in Harlem who feared the dispersion of their voting base, and attacked by liberal reformers for proposing that low income persons be forced to travel a considerable distance to work. The result was that, as the city began to remake the faces of east Harlem and the East River drive with project housing, the displaced inhabitants were dumped onto the west side, where landlords began cutting up the large apartments into small rabbit warrens, and the pattern of neighborhoods became a shambles.

The large influx of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the postwar years, amidst the upheaval in social mobility, created a further problem of definition of community. Once jammed largely into Harlem, the blacks (and Puerto Ricans) have spilled over into south Bronx (Hunts Point and Morrisania), east Harlem, the lower east side, Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, and pockets of the west side in Manhattan—taking over, largely, the areas vacated by Italians, the Irish, and the Jews. Here are concentrated the dilapidated and slum housing, the oldest school buildings, and antiquated hospitals and clinics.

But even Harlem, as a once settled area, has suffered the fate of the other ethnic sections of New York. From the 1920's to the 1940's, Harlem had its own "Society"—the Negro doctors, lawyers, ministers and entertainers who lived in Hamilton Grange, Sugar Hill, Edgecombe Avenue—the sections in north Harlem and the rocky heights fronting the Harlem River facing the Bronx. These persons gave a coherence to the area. Today, while many may still work

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there, the Negro middle and upper class lives in Hastings, New Rochelle, Amityville, and other suburbs in Westchester or Long Island. Dances once held in the Savoy Ballroom are now held in the Americana Hotel. What is left is the street gangs and the jungle.

There is no single Harlem "community," a veteran observer of black life has remarked. There are different groups of activists, each of whom has staked out a claim on an issue. If you want to open a business in Harlem—a branch say, of a brokerage house or a bank—you go to the Harlem Chamber of Commerce, or to Roy Innis of CORE, and clear it with them. If you want to appoint a principal of a school, you go to another group. The Harlem Architects Committee (ARCH), which led the fight against Columbia's intention to build a gymnasium in Morningside Park, has no constituency, but it has the ability, as do many of the multifarious groups in Harlem, to put any "outsider" on the spot. What unites all of Harlem is essentially an anger at "The Man," and groups compete in utilizing and exacerbating this anger. The new activists, thus, have no authority, but they do have power: the power to interfere, to raise hell, to shut things down.

This process has been accelerated to a considerable extent by the Lindsay administration which, in seeking to make contacts in the ghettoes, has provided recognition, some status, and some patronage for the militants. As one of the heads of the Urban Action Task Force explained: "When you have to go in and cool the ghetto, the older, established church groups or political clubs don't count; you have to find the local 'influential.'" As anthropological lore, or for political firefighting, all of this is very true and highly relevant. But what the Lindsay administration has also sought to do is to use this indigenous leadership as the base for its own political machine and to bypass the established groups who, traditionally, have been allied to the Democratic Clubs. In short, what the Poverty Program and the Lindsay administration have tended to do is to "place their bets" on the militants and activists as the source of new community leadership. What may be effective for local political base building is not, however, functional for institution-building and strengthening of community ties.

The decentralized crazy-quilt

If it is difficult, sociologically, to define neighborhood communities in New York, then, administratively, there is a worse mess. There are, as we have pointed out, at least 9 community systems now operative in the city, plus other services which have local offices: 62 Planning Districts, 25 Community Corporations, 35 Urban Renewal areas, 3 Model Cities projects, 30 Health Districts, 76 Police Precincts, 30 School Districts, 22 Urban Action Task Forces, 5 Neigh-

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borhood City Halls, 58 Sanitation districts, 15 Fire Department divisions, 42 welfare centers, 14 offices of the Bureau of Emergency Repair Services, etc.

The Citizens Union, when it proposed dividing New York City into districts "for more orderly planning and decentralization of services," recommended, it may be recalled, that all city services in each district be grouped in one location so that each district could develop its own plan in cooperation with the City Planning Commission. But the startling fact is that almost *none* of the present community boundaries, as it turns out, correlate with divisions of police, school, planning, etc. Neither is there much relation between the community planning districts and the political boundaries of districts, especially the councilmanic. If the city councilman is supposed to be the local representative in city hall, as the state assemblyman or state senator is in Albany, then the major political lines should have some determinate relation to the service and administrative boundaries; but they do not.

The City Planning Commission, which most recently had to wrestle with the problem of defining communities, had no real guide. The 1961 City Charter, which mandated community planning boards, stated: "Such districts shall coincide, so far as is feasible, with the historic communities from which the city has developed and shall be suitable as districts to be used for the planning of community life within the city." But there is not in the charter, perhaps prudently, any definition of what is meant by "historic communities" and no elaboration about the orbit of concerns which are to be encompassed in "the planning of community life" within the city. The commission, in setting down the boundary lines, sought to use "old names," but its chief criteria for districts was the identification of certain "cores" (e.g., Morningside Heights, Greenwich Village, Bay Ridge, Ridgewood) and to look for "communication barriers" such as waste land or major highways as the boundary lines. As the commission noted, in its own defense; "Stable and continuous areas containing persons with the same culture, have not been characteristic of New York. From its earliest beginnings, as an outpost of the Dutch West India Company, the city has consisted of a thrashing diversity of peoples, tongues, customs, national backgrounds and beliefs existing in proximity of each other."

Community and institutions

Assuming for the purposes of analysis that one can define "the community," and then locate "its leaders," a host of other questions still arise. One, for example, is the balance of rights between "the community" (defined as residents) and "institutions," in this instance, schools, churches, hospitals, etc. When these institutions seek to ex-

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pand, physically, as have the institutions on Morningside Heights, who is to make the decisions on such plans, and how? The frustrations of these institutions is, itself, a case study in the problematics of community action.

In 1947, the institutions on Morningside Heights[12] banded together to fight the deterioration of the area. Under their leadership, the decrepit area which bounded it on the north, La Salle Street, was renovated. The institutions financed the construction of Morningside Gardens, a middle income residential area of 1,000 apartments, and the city built, adjacent to it, the Grant Houses with 2,000 apartments. These 3,000 units replaced 3,200 slum apartments. The area, which was previously 51 per cent white, became 30 per cent black and Puerto Rican in Morningside Gardens, and 95 per cent black and Puerto Rican in the Grant houses.

These developments were completed in 1956-1957. In 1959, Morningside Heights Inc., the planning agency of the institutions, proposed a large scale reorganization of the area which would have created a new "city" of 100,000 persons on 600 acres (the size of Wilmington, Delaware), maintaining the existing population by high rise developments, but doubling the land area allotted to the institutions.

At that time, the institutions were popular with the politicians because it was felt that, backed as they were by David Rockefeller and the Rockefeller interests, they were all powerful. Hulan Jack, the borough president of Manhattan, therefore demanded that west Harlem, below the Heights, be included in the renewal plan as the price of his support. And Puerto Rican elements, living south of Morningside, in Manhattan Valley (the area from 110th Street to 103rd Street), demanded inclusion as well. The city, under the Housing Development Board, drew up a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, dividing the area into five districts, with the Cathedral Parkway area (around 110th Street) slated first for urban renewal. A Morningside Renewal Council, consisting of organizations in "the neighborhood," was set up, with government money to advise the city of "neighborhood" wishes. But in the process, the "core" Morningside Heights area, which is a neighborhood primarily made up of Columbia faculty and employees of other institutions found itself outvoted, and outshouted, by the other two groups. What then was *the* neighborhood for urban renewal?

In ten years, literally nothing has been accomplished. Tenants' organizations on the Heights have resisted bitterly any effort to dis-

[12] The institutions are Columbia University, Barnard College, Teachers College, the Riverside Church, Union Theological Seminary, the Interchurch Center, St. Luke's Hospital, St. Hilda and St. Hugh's School, Jewish Theological Seminary, International House, Corpus Christi Church and School, Home for Old Men and Aged Couples, Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

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place existing buildings. Student organizations have decried any efforts to "change the character" of the neighborhood, though in the decade the character of the neighborhood was indeed changed, largely by greedy landlords who cut up well-built houses and jammed them full of welfare cases, gaining exorbitant rents from the city. The reform Riverside Democrats began attacking the expansion plans of the institutions, claiming that tenants' needs and housing should have priority over institutional claims. (Curiously, enough, no public outcry came when City College demolished a number of blocks during this period for its expansion.)

The institutions, losing confidence in the ability of the city to act, in self-defense began buying property in the neighborhood, in part to clean it up, in part to assure space for their own needs. The "Bryn Mawr" was a case in point. An apartment house on 121st Street and Amsterdam Avenue, it had been converted to Single Room Occupancy, containing 190 rooms. The building itself was sublet to an operator who operated it as a transient business. The turnover was rapid, and it was populated largely by junkies, whores, alcoholics, and welfare families who were placed there temporarily by the city. In 1964, Barnard College bought the building and began to convert it into use for a student dormitory. At first, the college was applauded for "cleaning up" the neighborhood. But within a year, it came under attack for "heartlessness" in the treatment of the poor, the blacks, and the Puerto Ricans, and its effort to "change the character" of the neighborhood.[13] The institutions, as landlords, are feared by tenants who claim, quite accurately, that the institutions want the apartments for their own members, or the land for expansion. But whose needs are to take precedence?

The institutions on Morningside Heights—apart from their educational and medical services—represent one of the major economic resources of the city. They employ 20,000 persons (half of them professional and administrative) and have a payroll of $140 million a year. Of the 35,000 persons living in the "core area" of Morningside Heights (from 110th Street to 125th, and from Riverside Drive to Morningside Drive), one-third are "institutionally-related." A host of small businesses in the area are dependent on the institutions, and in particular on the 5600 students living within the core area.

How is one to assess the balance of rights between tenants and institutions? When Columbia proposed to build a gymnasium in Morningside Park to avoid the displacement of tenants, it was ac-

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[13] In 1961, 33 buildings in the Morningside Heights core area were tenanted as single room occupancies, commonly referred to as SROs, with 5,426 rooms. By the end of 1967, 20 buildings had been removed from SRO use, 18 of these being converted to institutional use, the other 2 to apartment use by private owners. The 13 remaining SRO buildings contained 2,085 rooms, a reduction of

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cused, suddenly, of taking away parkland from "the people."[14] When it seeks to deconvert SROs, it is accused of becoming antipoor. But how is the character of the neighborhood to be determined?

To a great extent, the influx of the blacks and Puerto Ricans, particularly through the SROs and the cutting up of old large apartments, was determined by the market, through the action of private landlords. When the institutions seek to use the same market mechanisms, their actions come under attack. Yet in any rational planning, the needs of a great intellectual and economic resource, providing jobs for many thousands of persons (particularly now of blacks) has to be taken into account in the balance of things. Such a task, inevitably, can't be performed by the neighborhood itself, for tenants have a vested interest in the rent controlled apartments they occupy.[15] It is a responsibility of the city to understand the needs of the institutions—for offices, laboratories, classrooms, dormitories —while seeking to expand the stock of housing to accommodate those who are displaced. But in the face of the multiplicity of pressures, the city has virtually abdicated all responsibility.

The accommodation of conflict

A number of extraordinary changes are taking place in American life and, in conclusion, we can deal only schematically with these changes and the problems they pose.

There is, first, the increasing "politicalization" of society, particularly in urban affairs. Activities which were once allocated through the market are now subject to political decisions or political controls. Previously the question of who was to be housed where, would be settled through a "rationing by purse." Today, the decisions as to where housing is to be sited, what tax abatements are to be given,

61 per cent from the original total. Institutional expansion, as proposed by Morningside Heights, Inc., would remove 9 of the remaining SROs over the next ten years.

[14] Roger Starr, "The Case of the Columbia Gym," *The Public Interest*, No. 13 (Fall 1967).

[15] One factor which has enormously complicated the situation is the money some tenants can now make by resisting evictions to the end. City College pays $750 to a tenant who is displaced for a city building. But private institutions may be forced to pay whatever a tenant can successfully demand. Recently, the Jewish Theological Seminary, which sought to use two adjacent buildings for expansion, offered $2,000 each to 17 remaining tenants in the building to help them relocate. The faculty proposed doubling this amount to $4,000, but the tenants refused. Columbia students threatened to occupy the apartments to force the Seminary to give up its expansion plans. Meanwhile, the lawyers for the tenants have asked $25,000 a family! With building costs going up 5 to 10 per cent a year, the institutions increasingly are forced to pay large sums to obtain complete possession of a building. St. Luke's Hospital, two years ago, paid $4,000 each to 22 tenants. Bank Street College, which has planned to move up to the Heights, paid $7,500 to each of 15 tenants, for it risked losing $3,500,000 of federal funds if it could not submit construction plans by a specified date.

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what proportion is to be reserved for low income or for municipal housing, etc. are made politically. And this carries over into many other areas as well. The sociological question is whether a society, this society, can carry such an increasing burden. The classical effects of politicalization are clear: the decision points are visible, rather than dispersed. The consequences are plain, for people know "whose ox will be gored." There is an overconcentration on law and legislation, and an increasing burden on administration. All of this, inevitably, increases the potential for group conflict. One of the chief reasons why in the last twenty years New York has been deemed to be "ungovernable" is the increasing politicalization of decision-making.

Second, a group of "new men" have come into the political system, specifically among the blacks. They are angry and they feel deprived. Their goal, in many instances, is not integration or the sharing of power but the control of their "own" institutions and enclaves. Yet two things are remarkable about this movement. The projects in which a large number of the new leaders are employed are federally-funded. And second, other than schools and a few local services such as health and the like, there is little possibility that the blacks will achieve control of major economic or political resources, for the locus of these resources are not in the neighborhood or community. To this extent, a whole series of unrealistic expectations are being generated in the black communities which may boomerang badly. What the black leadership may be able to achieve is a significant bargaining power, or even a veto in many instances, of city policies, but the talk of the ultramilitants about gaining control of the "major" institutions of society is unreal. The outcome will either be some accommodation or an increase in senseless rage. Despite the ultramilitant talk, the likelihood, still, is of accommodation.

Finally, we have seen the emergence, in a formal way, of the idea of "group rights" as the means whereby disadvantaged groups, particularly the blacks, can establish their claims in the system. The focal point here is education and it lies in the demands of the blacks for control of the schools in black districts, and for a quota or some preferential system in the colleges. This demand has brought the militant blacks squarely into conflict with the teachers union, which has felt its position threatened by the demand. It has raised the ugly spectre of anti-Semitism because a number of the blacks, particularly those in the leadership of the Afro-American Teachers Association, have deliberately made anti-Semitic statements in order to frighten away Jewish teachers and particularly Jewish principals from schools in the ghetto.

Three issues are involved in the argument for group rights. One is that of merit: the question whether a person should or should

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not achieve a position on the basis of his demonstrated ability, or whether a proportion of posts should be allotted on the basis of group membership. The second, allied to it, is that of common culture. The argument, made by Rhody McCoy at Ocean Hill, for example, was that any principal from the civil service list would be white, but that a white principal could not understand or guide a black child. Such an argument strikes at the traditional understanding of a common education and raises the question whether, in the future, all education in the major American cities may not be parochial or segmented by class or race. Third is the question of representation. Should there be majority rule or proportional representation; and if the latter, by geography or by group? When the New York State legislature proposed the election of a city Board of Education by boroughs, the Rev. Milton A. Galamison cried that the bill "deprives the blacks and Puerto Rican people of representation . . . Whenever we get into this nose-counting business, it's to the disadvantage of blacks and Puerto Ricans." And the administrator of Harlem's IS 201 district, Charles Wilson, agreed, saying: "The notion that the elected board will democratize the system is not so." What are the appropriate answers?

These divisive questions of political rights and political philosophy conjoin with a different set of problems that arise out of the nature of the size of the polis in a modern society. In a brilliant essay in the *American Political Science Review,* for December 1967, "The City in the Future of Democracy," Robert A. Dahl raised the question, "which is no longer a subject of discussion among political scientists," of what "is the optimum size for a city." And, he remarks, "the evidence seems to me . . . that the all-round optimum size for a contemporary American city is probably somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000, which, even taking the larger figure, may be within the threshold for wide civic participation."[16]

[16] Dahl says further: "There is, for example, no worthwhile evidence that there are any significant economies of scale in city governments for cities over about 50,000. The few items on which increasing size does lead to decreasing unit costs, such as water and sewerage, are too small a proportion of total city outlays to lead to significant economies; and even these reductions are probably offset by rising costs for other services such as police protection.

"Per capita city expenditures increase with the size of city, at least in the United States. In 1960 the mean expenditure for U.S. cities over 150,000 was $123 per capita compared with $70 per capita for cities in the 35-50,000 range. Yet there is no evidence that these higher costs per capita provide residents of large cities with a better life, taking it in the round, than the life enjoyed by residents of smaller cities. If it costs more in a city of a million than in a city of 25,000 to build, maintain and police a park within walking distance of every citizen, then higher per capita expenditures for parks in big cities hardly signify that their residents have better public services than residents of smaller cities . . ."

"The oft-cited cultural advantages of metropolis are also largely illusory. On the basis of his research on American cities, [Otis Dudley] Duncan estimates that the

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Not only has there been little discussion on the optimum size of a city or a "quarter" of a large city, but there has been little thought as to what is the appropriate size and scope of the appropriate social unit to handle what problems: i.e., what services and functions can be left to a neighborhood or community, what has to be handled on a borough or city level, what has to be conducted in a region, and what has to be federalized? All that we have are shibboleths. We have the traditional decentralizers such as Paul Goodman, or the regionalists, or the federalizers. But nowhere is there a detailed examination of what functions of government are best handled at what levels of government.

A few suggestions may be hazarded, but they must be tentative. They involve ways of separating kinds of decisions in such a way that some are best decided at the periphery by participatory discussion and voluntary agreement, and some are best decided at more central levels, not only in order to arrive at such decisions with dispatch, but also to be able to bring local interests into line with wider, more regional considerations. An example of such a division of decision-making power is the way the Human Resources Administration divides antipoverty funds between the various poverty areas according to impartial, mathematical calculations of the areas' poverty index. But then, once the amounts have thus been centrally fixed on the basis of such formulas, decisions on how to spend these funds are allowed to reflect the ebbs and flows of local sentiment and preference. Another example is the way the central Council Against Poverty decided this year, also on the basis of general and quantifiable criteria, to establish priorities to which all Community Corporations would be expected to allocate 70 per cent of their funds. These priorities are "Education Action, Manpower Action, Economic Development and Consumer Education, and Housing." Within the bounds of these general requirements, the localities can then pursue these objectives in ways that satisfy the particular moods, tastes, and nonquantifiable enthusiasms of their members. In the field of housing, central and long-range decisions on appropriate relative proportions of low and middle-income housing units can be recommended, within which communities can develop the housing projects that seem to them most humane and habitable. And central decisions on the allocation of funds for education according to fairly abstract principles of justice can still make possible neighborhood determination of the particular ways to spend such funds.

Behind the notion of optimum level is not just the question of administrative efficiency. There is the larger question, which is the

requisite population base for a library of desirable minimum professional standards, '50,000-75,000, for an art museum, 100,000 with a somewhat higher figure for science and historical museums' . . ."

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theme of this essay, of participation. One virtue of participation is a simple one. It not only creates a basis of community, by allowing people to share in decisions that affect their lives, it is also a deeply conservatizing institution for, like property, it gives people a stake in the decision which becomes binding on all.

Participation, however, is not the end of politics, as it seems to be in some of the rhetoric of the new left. It is the beginning, for politics arises in the first instance when one realizes that there is no such thing as *the* people—that no single decision can please all people. There are only *peoples*, with contradictory and conflicting ideas and interests. Suggest a jetport near some builtup area and a committee will arise to save 'our' community; locate an airport on a swamp, and there will be a committee to protect the wildlife; suggest a floating airport and a group will form to keep our lakes and waters clear of pollution.

A rational politics, to the extent there can be one, is bounded by economics, that is the recognition of the principle of relative scarcity and the necessity, therefore, of bargaining as a means of allocation and adjudication within some principle of justice. If in a multigroup society, within which there is to be effective participation, social conflict is to be regulated within bounds, then, just as mechanisms for economic bargaining were worked out in the 1940's and 1950's which brought the trade unions in the society, so mechanisms for political bargaining have to be established which allow for a tradeoff of objectives between groups. This means a more formal recognition of political groups, just as there was recognition of trade unions, and the establishment of rules of the game, within boundaries of defined communities within which the bargaining can take place.

But if economics deals with relative scarcity, politics includes the effort to gain relative advantage; and this is a never-ending process in human affairs. The political problem is to make sure that the process takes place within bounds and does not tear the society apart. And this possibility can only be realized if one strengthens that most fragile of social relations—the trust that each person has in the other that the rules of the game will be observed and that each will have his chance to participate.

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NEWSREEL

The agitators

When Mayor Lindsay first appointed me to the Board of Education, his aides took me aside to give me a stern warning.

"You're one of the youngest members, we've ever appointed to the Board," they said. "It is a distinguished position, academic and judicial in nature. In short, Haddad, no bomb throwing."

Properly chastised and warned, I went to my first Board meeting.

The Livingston Street auditorium was jammed. Packs of men and women roamed up and down the aisles. Police ringed the building, and stood along the walls.

I quietly found my place on the high podium, and Mrs. Rose Shapiro, then the President, called the meeting to order. She was immediately greeted by catcalls.

Within minutes, the place was in an uproar, people refused to give up the microphone and a psychologically sick, but trained white spokesman grabbed the microphone and kept chanting "get the pigs out, get the pigs out." The audience picked up the hypnotic chant.

Soon youthful black panthers (at least they were imitating the dress of the black panthers) hurled heavy boxes of petitions which cracked against Mrs. Shapiro's skull and grazed my head. Then the police moved in and cornered the teen-agers, their bravado disappeared into fear. Within minutes, Mrs. Shapiro terminated the meeting.

Rev. Milton Galamison, Hector Vasquez and myself, as new Lindsay appointments, along with the judicious and honorable Lloyd Garrison, stayed to quiet the audience and to hear their views.

Their statements were a bitter repetition of the ills suffered upon the black and Puerto Rican peoples of New York. They hailed their friends, and vilified their enemies. There was no middle ground.

That first night, going home, I believed we had done right by staying on. After all, these had been voiceless people, and it was only a small price to pay to stay and hear their insults and complaints, if the airing of them could eventually lead to change.

After several meetings, where the same premeditated disruption occurred, I began to notice that only about thirty people created all the fuss. We kept hearing these same people and their views over and over and over again. They used their tactics to keep others from the microphone. They skillfully translated our efforts to curb their testimony, in order to hear others, as an oppression against all black people. The audience, unaware of what had gone before, joined in their support.

There were, of course, forceful representatives of real constituencies. Some come from the Bronx Parents Association, others from

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I.S. 210 and Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Some came from the Joan of Arc complex on the West Side.

But take the example of the Joan of Arc complex which wanted to become a demonstration district. Several of us on the Board favored this. The West Side has a mixed community, poverty and wealth, newly emerging leaders and established educators. It would be a perfect environment to try a demonstration. Our logic was beginning to convince the few Board members needed to give us the seven votes for bringing this about in the face of enormous local and administrative opposition.

But, at the public meetings, a small group of frustrated white women—who had been frustrated over integration, frustrated over the police review board, frustrated over reform politics—kept violently disrupting the general meetings to get their views heard regardless of the agenda which frequently included similar problems in other sections of the city. These women wanted to be heard when they wanted to be heard and they wanted to talk as long as they wished. They were the law and they beamed at the uproar, convinced that they were winning their cause.

Actually, of course, they made it impossible for us to win the needed votes, and when the decentralization plan was proposed to the Mayor and the Regents, they were left out. Only two or three of us were still interested in the right of their cause. The others now had strong arguments about the ability of that group to carry out a complicated plan, acting with our delegated authority.

As I reflect on those audiences over the last several months I come to several conclusions:

The disruptive group we see is parochial, small and narrowly based. That is not to say that their viewpoints are not valid, but their actions are preventing the public from seeing how broadly based is the discontent with the school system. Their undemocratic arrogance is severely hurting their cause.

There is a large contingent of itinerant nuts who are protected by the small group who have usurped the public forum. Some of these men and women are psychologically unbalanced. One seriously threatened to kill my children unless I immediately jumped out of bed in the middle of the night and came to his lower east side clandestine meeting. He has no constituency but his name frequently appears in news and stories and he is frequently seen on television being arrested.

The press, which shows up meeting after meeting, and should, by this time, know the characters and their roles, still is very fuzzy about delineating a real community leader from the itenerant spokesman. The ad hoc television crews rushed out of the studio at the first report of turbulence, are, by far, the worst perpetrators of this problem.

But the most difficult to appreciate are the professional white agitators who instigate and arouse the passions of the frustrated mothers and students who attend the hearings. They push from behind, provoke the confrontation with the law, but never once in seven months, have they been arrested. . . .

—*William F. Haddad,* Manhattan Tribune, *February 15, 1969*

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A new look at the melting pot

NATHAN GLAZER

THE major part of *Beyond the Melting Pot* by myself and Daniel P. Moynihan dates from 1960-61. It was in those years, at the end of Mayor Wagner's second term, that the chapters on the five major ethnic groups (Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish) were written. I had formulated the major themes sometime earlier—they were that ethnicity in New York remains important; that it would continue important for politics and culture; that, from the perspective of New York City, Negroes and Puerto Ricans could be seen as the latest of the series of major ethnic groups that had—oddly enough, two by two, beginning with Germans and Irish, going on to Jews and Italians—come as immigrants to make up the population of the city; that helping to make each group different, in its own development and its relation to the rest of the city, were its basic cultural characteristics, and particularly important among these was family structure.

The conclusion of the book was fashioned and attached in late 1962, and was based, in large measure, on Moynihan's experience in running the campaign of Henry Morgenthau for Governor of New York State in that year, an experience which seemed to be consistent with and to confirm the basic assumptions of the book. The book was published in 1963. An appropriately obscure final paragraph reads: "Religion and race define the next stage in the evolution of the American peoples. But the American nationality is still forming. Its proc-

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esses are mysterious, and its final form, if there is ever to be one, is as yet unknown."

It is a combination of obtuseness and perception that more or less sums up how the book reads today. Obviously, at this point in time, during New York's primaries and election campaign of 1969, it hardly seems as though religion defines the present, or the future, major fissures in New York life. Race has exploded to swallow up all other distinctions, or so it would appear at the moment. Yet, ten years ago, and, to some extent even today, one of the major splits in New York City was between Catholics and Jews. The rise of the reform Democratic clubs was a means whereby the liberal upper-middle-class Jewish population of the city tried to seize the Democratic Party, dominated until then by Irish, and latterly some Italian, Catholic politicians. True, the issues on which they divided often seemed less important than the images of the leaders they felt comfortable with. And even in those distant years there was already some fudging evident between the liberal values of Jews and the conservative values of Irish and Italian Catholics when it came to matters of race, and in particular to school integration. But there *were* issues, such as support to parochial schools, and these issues were live enough to help account for the defeat of a new constitution for New York State not long ago.

By now, it hardly seems that the religious split matters. Catholics have become more liberal—in particular, on such matters as the role of traditional authority, censorship, sex, and morals, on which they used to diverge sharply from Jews—and Jews have become far more aware of the virtue of conservative working-class and middle-class values, which they always practiced but refused to celebrate. Even the American Jewish Congress, the most liberal of the major Jewish organizations, seems to spend as much of its energy these days, perhaps more, on the threats from black militants as on older concerns such as keeping inviolate the line between church and state. In any case, the administration of President Kennedy seems to have reduced the salience of that latter issue.

As a result of these changes among Jews, Mario Procaccino did better than could ever have been expected, a few years ago, with the Jewish working and lower-middle classes—just as the Civilian Police Review Board did poorly with the same group in the referendum of 1966. It isn't as if Procaccino were a new type of Italo-American political figure, either. He is one of a long line of similar types, and seems a direct descendant of an earlier Comptroller, Lawrence Gerosa, who is described in our book as exemplifying the ideological outlook of the small homeowners, so typical among New York's Italian Americans, which features "opposition to high taxes . . . welfare programs . . . 'frills' in schools. . . ." Eight years later, with a doubled welfare population and a higher crime rate (in reality, or

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only in popular consciousness, who is to say?), this outlook has a much wider appeal. College-educated and professional Jews may still resist the appeal of the conservative candidates, according to the study of voting on the Civilian Police Review Board by David W. Abbott, Louis H. Gold and Edward T. Rogowsky. Better-educated and poorer-educated Jews split drastically on this issue. But lower-middle-class and working-class Jews find the conservative candidates more and more attractive.

Thus, religion as a major line of division in the city is for the moment in eclipse. Race dominates the city more than could ever have seemed possible in 1963. That was, after all, before the first summer riots. The civil rights revolution had not yet broken out of the south. Nor had it yet raised the economic issues, and even less, the issue of potential separatism, that were to prove so much more explosive than the issues of political equality, which were, after all, part of the American creed all along. It seemed hardly possible then that the violence one had always associated with southern race relations could be transferred bodily to New York—its racial violence seemed far in the past (it had not had a race riot in either World War I or World War II, as had other northern cities). One looked at the demands of the civil rights movement in 1963—equality in the vote, equality in the courts, equality in representation in public life, equality in public accommodations—saw that they existed more or less in New York City, and concluded that the political course of the northern Negro would be quite different from that of the southern Negro. He would become part of the game of accommodation politics—he already was—in which posts and benefits were distributed to groups on the basis of struggle, of course, but also on the basis of votes, money, and political talent, and one concluded that in this game the Negroes would not do badly.

A number of considerations led to this outlook, which seemed reasonable enough at the time.

First, other New York groups had started at the bottom economically and politically, and had risen. What was to keep the Negro from doing the same, particularly since the crude evidence available suggested there had already been substantial shifts in occupation—from domestics and laborers to clerical workers and semiskilled workers, for example? On the basis of the experience of other ethnic groups, it was hard to see that this economic rise would need any additional direct commitment by local government. It would come through growth in the national economy, change in the structure of job market, higher levels of education (which were already evident), and movement into specific but rewarding parts of the economy and labor market—certainly the civil service, possibly the great private bureaucracies of New York businesses, hardly through entrepreneurial activity though there were opportunities there too.

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Second, there seemed to be no major obstacle to this development in the form of a massive, institutionalized racism. There was prejudice, of course, but other groups had met that. And compared to the greater scale of prejudice Negroes had met, there were now in existence well-funded city and state agencies devoted to fighting prejudice and discrimination in jobs, education, housing (though that was admitted to be an enormous problem), and indeed in the actions of both public and significant private bodies.

Third, *Beyond the Melting Pot* did suggest that a significant check to the economic rise of the Negroes might be found in the values of American Negroes themselves; these played some large but not fully explicated role in economic development. But the suggestion was tentative—no warning sign was flashed—because the economic and sociological fundamentals seemed so secure.

What was wrong with this optimistic outlook? First, it was based on poor data. As David Gordon points out in his article in this issue, the analysis of the distribution of population by income is a late development, and even so we are in bad shape between censuses. When the work on *Beyond the Melting Pot* began, the figures for the decade 1940-50, were available, and showed remarkable change, owing to the war. The stagnation of opportunities for the Negro after the Korean war was to be discovered in the statistics available for 1950-60, but I didn't discover them. There was a serious undercount of Negro males in New York (as in the whole country) which probably led to an overstatement of the economic position of the Negro. The undercount was first pointed out in 1955 in an article by Ansley J. Coale, but it was not until after our book was published, amazingly enough, that this became general knowledge among social scientists, aside from some specialists in demography. Since the analyses of income data were then so scanty, one depended on occupational data, and these, interestingly enough, showed more change for Negroes than the income data. After the book was published, Herman P. Miller demonstrated that the Negro had moved not at all in relation to whites since the mid-1950's; Michael Harrington helped rediscover poverty; the civil rights movement for the first time took up economic aims (only in late 1963, it will be recalled); and the relatively optimistic view of the Negro's economic future in our book collapsed.

And yet, one must still remember how different things looked in the first two years of the Kennedy administration. Then the problem of poverty and inequality, it seemed, could be handled by a tax cut, an Area Redevelopment Administration program for the by-passed areas, a manpower training program for workers displaced by automation. The poverty program was still, in those days, a juvenile-delinquency-fighting program. Life was simpler then!

Still, one wonders how far off the prognosis of *Beyond the Melting*

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Pot was, after all. If one were so inclined, though hardly anyone is, I am afraid, one could still find remarkable progress since the early 1960's, using the criteria of numbers of Negroes in colleges, the number in high positions in government, the numbers in high-paying jobs. David Gordon's analysis is sobering and in some ways hard to understand, perhaps a metropolitan-wide analysis of the position of Negroes and Puerto Ricans would show a less despairing picture. Certainly the situation of New York seems unique when compared with the changes the census records for the Negro in metropolitan areas for the country as a whole, and one is at a loss to understand *why* Negroes do comparatively so much worse here, when the city has (still) one of the more enlightened governments and bodies of public opinion.

If one looks at the Puerto Ricans, who are economically no better off than Negroes, one does find a substantial move in the second generation that seems to correspond to what one expected for new groups in the city. Thus, Nathan Kantrowitz, comparing second generation Puerto Ricans in 1950 and 1960 (small groups in both years, but their numbers are rapidly growing) showed they improved their position, both in terms of numbers of graduating high school and college, more rapidly than other white males in the city. And while the story on occupational mobility is mixed, even there one sees some grounds for optimism in a substantial shift into white collar work.

I have not seen such an analysis for Negroes (that is, one based on movement of Negroes born in the city), but the basic question remains: if one had it, would it really matter? And one must conclude sadly, it would not. There is one basic reason for this. Perhaps it made sociological sense at the time to treat Negroes as an ethnic group in New York, parallel to other ethnic groups, to evaluate their place in the city in contrast to that of immigrant groups, and record how rapidly this position was changing, but it did not make *political* sense. It is even a question, of course, how much sociological sense it made. It made some, I still think. After all, Negroes themselves often saw their place in the city in these terms, viewed themselves as fighting not an undifferentiated white society but an ethnically diverse one, and in such a society some groups, for some purposes, were allies. That Negroes were, or were becoming, one group in a group society was the basic assumption of the book, and in that sense, perhaps, it was closer to social reality than some analyses of American society which saw assimilation and integration as already more advanced for most groups in the society than was actually the case.

Where the book failed was in determining what *kind* of group Negroes would form. As an ethnic group, they would be one of many. As a *racial* group, as "blacks," as the new nomenclature has it,

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they form a unique group in American society. In a sense, of course, they always have been; they are old settlers whose presence shaped our Constitution, they were the only group held as slaves, they dominate a good part of American culture and literature—no one could forget that or deny that. But New York City, *Beyond the Melting Pot* argued, while it was America, was also different from America. It accentuated and heightened one distinctive goal of American society—its openness to new groups and its even-handed distribution of opportunity. Here, the larger American experience of the Negro, based on slavery and repression in the south, would be overcome, as the rest of the Negroes joined society, in conflict and accommodation, as an ethnic group.

It didn't happen. Groups may preexist in sociological reality, but they shape themselves by choice—they define their own categories (and this, curiously enough, was also a major theme of the book). In 1963, it looked as if the categories could still be defined as ethnic, and that seemed to us most human. In 1969, we seem to be moving to a new set of categories, black and white—and that is ominous. On the horizon stand the fantastic categories of the "Third World," in which all the colors, Black, Brown, Yellow and Red (these are the favored terms for Negro, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican, Chinese and Japanese, and American Indian—a biologically and humanly monstrous ordering it seems to me—among the militants of southern California), are equated as "the oppressed" in opposition to the oppressing whites.

Human groups do not exist in nature—or rather, the part of difference that exists because of nature is unimportant. They are chosen, and whether one chooses to see oneself as Third World, Black, Negro, is not determined by either biology or sociology—it is a free act, even if constrained by social influences. Thus, as Negroes become "black"—and, perhaps beyond that, part of an alliance of the "internally colonized"—one cannot say this was inevitable, that the shaping forces of American society determined it. The experiences of Negroes in New York since the great migration fifty years ago has had a great deal in it, good and bad. If one compared it with the first fifty years of the Irish, the Italians, and the Jews, I don't know where one would come out, but I am convinced there would be enough in that comparison to justify an ethnic rather than a racial or "internally-colonized" self-image.

But the arts of politics, as exercised in the nation and the city, were insufficient to prevent a massive move toward what must be, for the nation and the city, a more damaging identity. The failure is a complex one. Another reality that was less clear in 1960-61 was how massively Negroes (and Puerto Ricans) abstained from politics, in some of the key ways that counted, for example, voting. They abstained *more* in the 1960's than in the mid-1940's in New York

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City, and the reasons are unclear. Arthur Klebanoff has studied this for the city, particularly for Brooklyn. Between 1950 and 1965, the proportion of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in Brooklyn rose from 9 per cent to 29 per cent of the population. This should have meant a massive change in political representation, and presumably in rewards. It didn't.

> The remnants of the older political machinery, once broad-based, continued to control Brooklyn politics as late as 1966. Jews and Italians ran the stores, owned the apartments, and filled the political clubhouses. This was to be expected. The surprise was the absence of any competing Negro or Puerto Rican organizations. Jews and Italians continued in office long after the districts they represented became predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican. . . . The existing political organizations did not recruit in Negro and Puerto Rican areas because they had no need to. Nonvoters have never been of great interest to politicians in control of a small constituency. And no politician managed to convince Brooklyn's white party machinery that Negroes and Puerto Ricans would ever be anything but nonvoters.

Klebanoff's analysis demonstrated that while Negroes and Puerto Ricans formed approximately 30 per cent of Brooklyn's total population and 25 per cent of its eligible voting population, they were no more than 15 per cent of Brooklyn's registered voters. It is understandable, then, at the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Local Governing Board should have declared, "Men are capable of putting an end to what they find intolerable without recourse to politics." Unfortunately, when they do, only uncertainty, insecurity, and disorder can result.

Beyond the Melting Pot explored some of the reasons why Negroes and Puerto Ricans would not organize as rapidly and effectively as other groups. For the Negroes, it suggested that the mere fact that they did not form a self-consciously foreign group, with special cultural demands that had to be met (food, language, religion) meant that the bases for organization were restricted. For Puerto Ricans, it suggested that the attitudes developed toward the paternalistic government of Puerto Rico were easily transferred to the government of the City of New York. Thus, in both groups, the push to organization and self-help were somewhat muted. But in the very nature of the ethnic analysis, this could not be expected to last —the groups would become more self-conscious, better organized. What could not be foreseen, of course, was what form this organization would take.

In the Negro communities, we have seen a wholly admirable and impressive rise of self-assertion and pride. The distinctive aspects of the Negro experience in America and Africa are being explored, reported, recorded, analyzed, and increasingly taught, both in private and in public schools. Aspects of Negro experience that were pre-

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viously considered by Negroes themselves, unimportant, or matter-of-fact, or even shameful, are becoming part of the curriculum for this new movement of self-assertion. All this deserves encouragement and support. When it is combined, as it so often is, with an effort to teach an unreal past and an unreal present, one can still understand it—every group has its own similar tendencies. But when it is combined with an effort to separate Negroes from the mechanisms by which varied groups, in this most mixed of nations, participate in a common society and a common state, then we can only be saddened and frightened.

All the work of incorporating Negroes into a common society—economically, culturally, socially, politically—must be pushed as hard as possible. All those—and they still, from all evidence, form the large majority, if a quiet one—who want to be part of a common society must be given every aid and encouragement, and must be associated in every common enterprise. It is hard to believe that the genius for compromise and accommodation which has kept this a single city, despite the fact that it was made of minorities, will now fail. But the possibility, in 1969, is a haunting one.

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New York City's mixed economy: ten years later

DICK NETZER

In the late 1950's, there was little anxiety about New York City's economy. Rather, there was blissful ignorance on the part of the bulk of the business, labor, and civic communities, and heated denial by public officials of any serious cause for alarm. The statistics which documented a small but real decline in the city's overall population, for the first time in history, were denounced as inaccurate.[1] The observation that retail trade was rapidly decentralizing to the city's suburbs was greeted as no more than self-serving opposition by large retailers to increases in the city's sales tax: after all, the dollar volume of retail sales in the city *was* increasing. Successive annual reports by the mayor reassured us about the observed shift of manufacturing establishments from the city to the suburbs and beyond, by pointing to the city's resistance to rising unemployment rates during the three recessions of the Eisenhower years. Similarly, the well-publicized establishment of new office centers in the suburbs by national corporations was countered by the striking evidence of the Manhattan office building boom; during the 1950's (unlike the 1960's), New York City was almost alone among American cities in this.

[1] In 1957, the city government commissioned a special census, in the confident expectation that it would show an increase in population, thus entitling the city to an increase in state per capita grants that would more than offset the cost of the special census. In the event, the special census showed a significant decline.

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The euphoria of the 1950's about New York City's economy, like the other euphoric aspects of the Eisenhower years, has long since been dissipated. The publication (between 1959 and 1961) of the findings of the New York Metropolitan Region Study, directed by Raymond Vernon, and of the 1960 census results contributed to a major change in the climate of opinion. The Vernon study was a massive, three-year economic study of the New York region—the first in thirty years—conducted under the aegis of Harvard's Graduate School of Public Administration and commissioned by the Regional Plan Association.[2] Its assignment was to analyze the key economic and demographic features of New York City and the seventeen counties surrounding it in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut, and to project economic and demographic trends from the 1956 baselines to 1965, 1975, and 1985. The study was designed as an investigation of underlying trends in urban development in the New York region; it was not a blueprint for action: "Its end product is an analysis of the Region's probable development, assuming that the economic and demographic forces in sight follow their indicated course and assuming that the role of government is largely limited to existing policies."[3]

The Vernon projections

Projections of substantial growth in employment, population, and per capita income for the region were the actual end product. For example, employment was forecast to increase from 6.4 million in 1956 to 9.5 million in 1985; population was expected to grow from 15.1 million to 23.7 million. The implication was that nearly all households in the region would be increasingly better off and consciously aware of the improvement in their material conditions.

However, growth within the region was expected to be highly uneven. Employment in the region's core—New York City and Hudson County—would grow only slowly, while it would more than double in the rest of the region. Population would continue to decline slowly in the core, while increasing by nearly 9 million (on a 1956 base of 7 million) in the suburbs and exurbs. Many of the traditional mainstays of the economy of New York City, such as garment manufacturing, the port, and retail trade, were expected to decline or, at best, remain constant in terms of employment.

The really strong point in the city's economy, it was predicted,

[2] The earlier study, in the 1920's, was a pioneering work directed by Professor Robert Murray Haig of Columbia as part of work on the Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs. The Vernon study's results were published by the Harvard University Press in ten volumes; the two comprehensive volumes were Edgar M. Hoover and Raymond Vernon, *Anatomy of a Metropolis* (1959), and Raymond Vernon, *Metropolis 1985* (1960). The data and conclusions cited here are mostly to be found in the latter.

[3] From Edward S. Mason's Foreword to the Vernon study volumes.

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would be office-type activities in Manhattan, whose employment would increase from about 1 million in 1956 to nearly 1.4 million in 1985. But most of the rest of the city would be a "gray area," with declining or stagnant economic activity and decreasing attractiveness as a place in which to live. Even so, the prospects were not all that gloomy. The expected rates of decline in New York City, Hudson County, Newark, and the other older centers would be moderate enough to permit people, institutions, and businesses to adjust to the changed circumstances.

Nevertheless, such projections of economic and population decline were not likely to cheer up city government officials and others with a real stake in the older cities. The Vernon projections, moreover, coincided with unmistakable evidence of contemporaneous economic difficulties for New York City, especially declines in manufacturing employment and continued high unemployment rates among Negroes and Puerto Ricans, most particularly young males. In fact, in the 1960's, the degree of pessimism about the city's economic problems soon exceeded that warranted by the economic changes forecast in the Vernon study. Industrial and job promotion efforts by official and unofficial groups, public policy changes (i.e., in taxes) to "encourage business" and the like have been clothed with a rhetoric, if not the belief, implying that New York's economy is on a slippery downhill path, requiring urgent and massive action of one kind or another. But what is the economic reality today, ten years after the Vernon study? One useful way of appraising the New York economy's performance is to compare it with the Vernon expectations for the first decade of the study's thirty-year projection period. To do this, it is necessary to examine somewhat more closely the explicit projections for the longer period and to consider the model of the urban economy used to develop these projections.

Toward 1985

Some of Vernon's 1985 employment projections for New York City and for the rest of the metropolitan region are shown in Table 1. As indicated earlier, the only fast-growing sector of the city's economy was expected to be the office sector, such as finance, central corporate offices, nonprofit organizations, and related business and professional services. There would be virtually no overall growth in employment in activities that were essentially serving the resident population, ranging from retail trade to local government. This is not surprising, because the city population was projected to decline. The somewhat smaller population would have higher incomes, enabling households to consume more services, but even the expected slow gains in productivity in the service sector would make it possible to supply additional services without increasing employment.

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TABLE 1. *Vernon Study Employment Projections for the New York Metropolitan Region, 1956–1985 (in Thousands).*

	NEW YORK CITY		REST OF REGION	
	1956	CHANGE TO 1985	1956	CHANGE TO 1985
Total employment	3,895	+512%	2,508	+2,547%
Major classes:				
Manufacturing and wholesale trade	1,281	+ 73	1,049	+ 893
Finance, central offices, business and professional services	978	+377	418	+ 532
Population-servicing activities—consumer trade and services, government, public utilities	1,520	+ 45	982	+ 996
Selected manufacturing groups:				
Women's & children's apparel	199	− 55	65	+ 16
Other communications-oriented industries (printing, electronics, etc.)	263	+ 71	148	+ 211
National-market manufacturing in small plants	252	+ 84	219	+ 186
National-market manufacturing in large plants	53	− 17	287	+ 116

Sources: Raymond Vernon, *Metropolis 1985* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), and Benjamin Chinitz, "Employment Projections for Parts of the Region," in Berman, Chinitz, and Hoover, *Projection of a Metropolis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961).

Little growth in city employment in goods-handling activities—manufacturing, wholesale distribution, freight transportation—was expected. Essentially, this was a projection of a long-term, nationwide trend toward decentralization of goods-handling activities from cramped quarters in central locations to more spacious outlying sites. But the projection has a special character in New York. New York City never has been dominated by huge mass-production industrial plants, as has been Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and other old industrial cities. Manufacturing in New York traditionally has been largely made up of industries able to accommodate to multilevel loft buildings, street congestion, and all the other attributes of central locations. These obviously must be industries for which there are compensating advantages in central locations. Most such industries were characterized by the Vernon study as "communications-oriented," that is, industries dependent on close face-to-face contact with suppliers and customers, typically involving short production runs and rapid changes in style or customer demand. They often produce items that are new to the market; many of the firms are young, and the mortality rate among them is high. They therefore do not require, and usually cannot afford, large plants and heavy investment in equipment. The important attributes of a location for

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them are ease of contact, accessibility to suppliers, ability to rent (rather than buy) space and equipment. If they become very successful and move into long, standardized production runs, they are likely to leave the city for outlying sites, but their places will be taken by other newcomers.

The garment industry, printing and publishing, and specialized electronics firms are the largest of such communications-oriented groups. Others include fur goods, jewelry, small leather goods, games and toys, and advertising. There is also a wide range of manufacturing that is not especially dependent on close communications, but that is usually carried on in rather small plants; traditionally, New York and other central cities have been housing a great deal of this activity, ranging from lighting fixtures to men's apparel. In Table 1, this group is labeled "national-market manufacturing in small plants."

In the past, growth in the small plant activities in central cities has been sufficient to more than offset the decentralizing trends. The new thing, in the Vernon projections, is that this was no longer expected to be the case for New York City. True, continued expansion, at fairly good rates, was expected for many such activities, but this expansion was seen as barely enough to counter the large anticipated declines in the garment industry and in other kinds of manufacturing, including that carried on in large plants.

In the region outside New York City, as Table 1 shows, employment was expected to approximately double for each of the major classes, in part because of the decentralizing industrial forces and partly in order to serve the huge increase in the population of the outlying areas. An especially noteworthy aspect of the projections is the large expected increase in the communication-oriented activities, both in offices and in manufacturing plants, in the suburbs. This reflects changing technology (and hence locational requirements) for some of these activities—such as the spin-off of computer-based billing and similar operations from the main office to a suburban location.

The underlying model

Like nearly all such analyses of regional and urban economics, the Vernon study model is based on the assumption that regional growth in employment opportunities leads to population growth, rather than the other way around. Given the birth and death rates of the population now residing in a city or region, the ultimate change in the size and composition of the population depends on the rate of net migration into or out of the city. A high birth rate does not necessarily mean a growing population. People can and will leave for job opportunities elsewhere. And, of course, vice versa.

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For most cities and regions, the migration rate depends largely on the income levels in any one community, and the rate of growth in job opportunities there relative to other parts of the country. (The exceptions are areas with special retirement and/or climatic attractions.) To be sure, an increase in the population can lead temporarily to added employment in activities serving the residents; but the ultimate independent determinant of population growth is employment in "export" activities—production of goods and services sold in broad regional, national, and world markets.

This model does indeed conform with the empirical evidence. For example, rates of migration from the rural south and from Puerto Rico to large northern cities clearly did slow up in the late 1950's, when employment growth had been affected by the recessions of that period. (There had been an even more dramatic slowing of the rate of in-migration during the Great Depression in the 1930's.) The limited data we have suggests strongly that the boom of 1962-1968 has elicited a speed-up in the rate of in-migration to northern cities. Part of this no doubt reflects other simultaneous occurrences in both the south and the north (e.g., the civil rights movement); but the speed-up during this period in Puerto Rican net migration to the mainland—which seems to reflect, in a rather pure form, relative changes in job opportunities—is strong support for this kind of analysis.

As for changes in the independent variable—employment in activities that serve people living outside New York—the Vernon study explained them by refining an analytical approach that is now the standard one in regional economic analysis: the "mix-shares" approach.[4] At any given moment, a region is characterized by a mix of industries, some of which are slowly growing on a nationwide basis and some of which are rapidly growing. If one projects national trends in these industries, the results suggest the "expected" growth of employment in national-market-serving industries in the region. Whether the region realizes these expectations depends on its competitive position with respect to each of these industries, that is, whether the region can maintain or increase its share of national employment in the industry.

For the New York metropolitan region—New York City and seventeen counties surrounding it in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut—the Vernon study found that the mix was dominated by fast-growing activities, such as office work and the production of luxury goods. If the region maintained its shares of national-market activities, employment between the mid-1950's and 1985, the target year for the projections, would rise in the region more than half again as rapidly as in the country as a whole.

[4] This was developed in Robert M. Lichtenberg's *One-Tenth of a Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

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However, the shares were not expected to be maintained (especially in national-market manufacturing). This should not be surprising. The newer regions of the country, especially in the west, are expanding more rapidly than *all* of the older ones, including New York. The overall projection was that total employment (including employment in local activities) would rise somewhat more slowly than in the nation as a whole. This would be reflected in the aggregate population growth for the region: after 1965, the net migration flow was projected to slow down and even reverse itself. For the first time in its history, the New York region, somewhere around 1975, would be a net exporter of people to the rest of the country.

A modified form of the "mix-shares" approach can be applied *within* a metropolitan region, as well. New York City, like other central cities, does tend to have a favorable mix, because fast-growing services and office activities are the special province of the central cities. However, like other central cities, its competitive position vis-à-vis its suburbs is rather poor. The Vernon study conclusion, noted earlier, was that employment in New York City would grow moderately to 1985, but jobs in the rest of the region would grow more than three times as rapidly; New York City, with more than half the region's jobs at the opening of the 1960's, would account for only .5 million of the projected 3 million increase in regionwide employment.

An additional reason why such a trend was anticipated is that population movements within metropolitan areas have been even more decentralizing than the shifts in industry. This has reflected consumer preferences for more spacious living, usually in single-family houses, and the higher incomes enabling households to satisfy their preferences. But here, too, relative changes in job opportunities are not insignificant. The middle class exodus to the suburbs in search of more space and higher levels of amenity has pulled with it large numbers of jobs in population-serving activities, such as retail trade, financial institutions, and local government. In addition, the decentralization of manufacturing and other goods-handling activities from central cities to suburbs has enhanced the attractiveness of suburban residential locations by offering expanded suburban job opportunities.

The decline in manufacturing jobs

The Vernon study included projections for 1965 and 1975, as well as 1985. We can compare the outcome in the mid-1960's with the Vernon projections (although, as is always the case in the social sciences, the data are not entirely comparable). In the aggregate, the Vernon forecast for employment in the twenty-two county metro-

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politan region for 1965 was almost exactly on target.[5] These aggregates, however, hide some important departures from the Vernon expectations.

First, performance in goods-handling activities—principally manufacturing, but also the wholesale distribution of goods and freight transportation—was substantially below the Vernon projections. The Vernon study, on the basis of an expected one-fourth increase in manufacturing employment nationwide, had projected an increase of more than 20 per cent in manufacturing jobs in the metropolitan region. It was expected that nearly all of this increase would take place outside New York City, as manufacturers and wholesalers sought the extensive sites needed for continuous production processes in single-level plants, such sites being readily accessible by truck transportation. However, the regional growth expected was so large (over 400,000 jobs in less than a decade) that some of it would occur within New York City, mainly in the outer parts of the city. In fact, manufacturing employment in the nation and in the metropolitan region grew by very little—only about 3 per cent. In this context of little regional growth, decentralization from the central city continued, to produce a decline in manufacturing jobs of nearly 100,000 in New York City, rather than the modest increase forecast. Much of the decline occurred in Manhattan, in the traditional Manhattan factory jobs, such as the apparel industry, but there were also sizable declines in all the older manufacturing sections of the city, in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and western Queens.

Low-skilled factory jobs in New York have been one of the principal historic points of entry into the urban economic system for inmigrants from abroad and from other parts of the country. For them, the decline has been even more serious than these figures suggest. Throughout manufacturing industry, an increasing proportion of "manufacturing" jobs has been held by nonproduction workers, mainly in white collar occupations. In the entire metropolitan region, the number of production-worker jobs has actually declined significantly since the early 1950's, and in New York City the decline has been considerably sharper.

The boom in white collar jobs

Second, and offsetting this for the city's economy (although not for the low-skilled migrants), the growth in white collar jobs has been even greater than the high growth rate projected in the Ver-

[5] The 1965 data used here are those in Regional Plan Association, *The Region's Growth* (A Report of the Second Regional Plan, May 1967). Since the completion of the Vernon study, Regional Plan Association has been almost continuously revising the projections and estimates, in connection with its development of a Second Regional Plan for the New York Region.

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non study. Consequently, the *total* increase in employment in New York City between the mid-1950's and 1965 has been nearly twice as large as the modest increase that was projected.

The Vernon study anticipated the strong national trend toward a "service economy"; it concluded that the New York region would come close to maintaining its share of the various white collar activities in which it has long been very well represented indeed. Moreover, it projected that, although there was bound to be somewhat faster growth in these activities outside the city than within it, the Manhattan central business district would continue to be attractive for all sorts of office and financial enterprises. In part, this last conclusion was based on intuition. Improvements in transportation and communications and other changes in the economy offer the central office elite, so important to the Manhattan economy, two opposite possibilities: decentralizing more in the field, closer to operations, but able to travel quickly to, and communicate easily with, a headquarters point; or concentrating even more at the headquarters, with the ability to reach any point in the country swiftly, as needed. Vernon believed the latter to be the more likely development, and that a wide range of supporting services and back-office operations would continue to cluster around the executive decision-makers in Manhattan.

To date, these findings seem, if anything, an understatement for the country, for the region, and for New York City. In the Vernon study, regional employment in the industries with a primarily white collar character—finance, retail trade, services, and government—was projected to rise by roughly 400,000 from 1956 to 1965; the actual increase has been closer to 700,000. For New York City, the projected increase was about 75,000 and the actual increase has been about 240,000 (at least two thirds in Manhattan). The regional increase in office workers (excluding retail clerks and the like) was over 200,000, half in New York City (and nearly all of this in Manhattan). By 1965, there were over 800,000 office workers in Manhattan, 200,000 more elsewhere in the city, and another 400,000 in the rest of the metropolitan region.

One factor in this growth of white collar jobs should not be overlooked: the continued rise of government employment in New York City. The Vernon study had quite reasonably assumed that, with a stable or slowly growing population and with the possibility of automation in many government activities, the increase in government employment in the city would be minimal. This has not been the case, particularly for municipal government employment. Expansion of the scope and quality of municipal services, in large part in response to recognition of the gravity of the social problems public services are designed to cope with, has brought continued increases in public employment. Ten per cent of those who are employed in

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New York now work for New York City itself. Another 3 per cent work for the state and federal governments. Although the state and federal percentage is about the same as it was in 1955, the New York City figure represents a 3 per cent increase since 1955.

The continued office building boom in Manhattan affords dramatic visible evidence that Manhattan's attraction for office activities is very strong indeed, despite a few well-publicized moves of corporate offices to the suburbs and despite the natural growth of locally oriented office activities (e.g., banks) in growing suburban communities. Regional Plan Association projections indicate that office jobs in Manhattan will increase by at least 300,000 during the remainder of this century, and possibly by as much as 700,000. Manhattan thus is the strong point in the city's economy, because it has been attracting the lion's share of growth in white collar activities, to a degree that more than offsets (numerically) the decline in factory and related goods-handling jobs.

In the boroughs outside Manhattan, however, the increase in white collar jobs has been more modest and they have lost factory jobs, as noted earlier. Their experience has been one of overall stability of employment, with real declines in the nearer-to-Manhattan older sections (which are especially accessible to ghetto residents) and modest increases in population-serving jobs in the outer sections still experiencing population growth. Because these outer sections are by now almost fully built up (except for Staten Island), little further population growth can be expected. This suggests that the prospect is one of slowly declining job opportunities in the boroughs generally.

This is in keeping with the picture the Vernon study painted. The locational advantages of Manhattan for office activities are obvious, but no such natural advantages obtain for the other boroughs. And, by and large, the disadvantages of Manhattan for goods-handling activities—especially traffic congestion and lack of space for plant expansion—apply to the boroughs as well, at least to their near-Manhattan sections. If left to "natural" economic forces, the land masses of the boroughs will have only one economic use, for housing.

But here, too, the prospects are not attractive. The housing stock in most of Brooklyn and the Bronx and western Queens is relatively old (largely pre-1935); it is in the form of housing types with limited market appeal (small apartments and two-family houses). The neighborhoods are densely built up, usually physically unattractive, and decidedly inhospitable to the automobile ownership and use that is part of middle class American living. True, they are reasonably accessible to Manhattan jobs, by public transportation; but that public transportation is often slower than, and rarely as com-

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fortable as, commutation (by automobile or train or bus) from the nearby suburbs.

The only real attractions of many of these neighborhoods is that they offer cheap (subway) transportation and cheap (rent-controlled) housing. This means, therefore, that their attractions are confined to people for whom low-cost is overwhelmingly important, those who have little choice in residential location. Even here, because income levels are rising even for those at the bottom of the income distribution,[6] they face a declining market demand.

Vernon pointed out that massive public intervention, of an order that would change the residential character of whole neighborhoods, could interrupt the "graying" process. Similarly, there is the possibility, if not the likelihood, of bending "natural" economic forces to improve employment prospects in the boroughs. There will be rapid growth in office employment in the metropolitan region outside Manhattan. Conceivably, a significant proportion of these jobs could be located in expanded white collar subcenters in the boroughs, such as downtown Brooklyn, Jamaica, and Fordham Road in the Bronx, points with existing retail concentrations and superior transportation facilities. This would require purposive and coordinated development efforts, by public agencies and private investors; such efforts are even now in the initial stages. Also, there are possibilities, for example in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, for industrial redevelopment of some of the older industrial sections.

On balance, therefore, the employment opportunities afforded by New York City's economy have been marginally better than the Vernon study's projections of a decade ago. Mostly, this has been a Manhattan phenomenon. But it need not be so in the future, although that is still the most likely outcome.

Population changes

The Vernon analysis of relative rates of employment growth in the city and suburbs, and the appraisal of likely housing preferences vis-à-vis the probable character of the housing supply in city and suburbs, led to a forecast of slow, long-term decline in the city's total population. Writing before the 1960 census had confirmed that the decline had already started, the report anticipated the actual decline to begin in the late 1960's.

Manhattan's population, the report projected, would continue to "thin out," as it has been doing since 1910; the extreme high densities of the older slum areas (the Lower East Side and Central Harlem) have been reduced by some demolition but even more by reductions

[6] During the 1960's, the number of households in the metropolitan region with incomes below $5,000 (in constant dollars) has been declining by about 40,000 a year.

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in the numbers of persons per household, as second- and third-generation family members escape from the slums. In the Bronx and Brooklyn, the slow decline which commenced in the 1950's would continue, as they too began to go through the Manhattan "thinning-out" process. Population would rise in Queens until it more or less filled up by the late 1960's, and population growth would take off in Staten Island, because of completion of the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge (and the scarcity of sites for new housing in competitive areas, such as the boroughs and the near-Manhattan suburbs).

Because the existing population of American cities experiences more births than deaths, a decline in the total population of a city can only occur if the volume of gross migration out of the city substantially exceeds the volume of gross migration into the city. For New York City in recent years, there have been two main streams of out-migrants and two main streams of in-migrants. The principal out-migration is the suburban exodus, and then there is the smaller but significant migration of people at retirement age to more congenial climates. Both migration streams are composed mainly of relatively well-off households, and both are largely white. One of the in-migration streams is largely white and nonpoor: the traditional influx of people of working age, typically young, to seek fame and fortune in the big city. But the other is quite different: the influx of poor, largely unskilled Negroes and Puerto Ricans.

Thus, the actual decline in population experienced in the 1950's occurred because the net out-migration of (relatively rich) whites exceeded the net in-migration of (relatively poor) Negroes and Puerto Ricans. The higher birth rates in the latter groups also helped accentuate the trend. The Vernon projections implied that this trend would continue.

During the 1960's, it appears that the net out-migration of whites has continued at a rate at least as rapid as forecast. However, the growth in the Negro and Puerto Rican population seems to have exceeded the earlier expectations (even though there was net out-migration of Puerto Ricans from New York City in some years in the early 1960's). The city's population is now probably more than a quarter of a million higher than in 1960, and the Negro and Puerto Rican percentages are a good deal above the projections.

In Manhattan, population has continued to decline, and at a fairly rapid rate; net *out*-migration of Negroes and Puerto Ricans has been substantial. But in the Bronx and Brooklyn, population has increased rather than declined during the 1960's. Offsetting this, Staten Island has not yet really taken off.

The larger-than-expected total population has distributed itself in ways which differ from the Vernon model. There has been an extensive amount of "in-filling" of new housing on relatively small vacant sites in the outer parts of the city, in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and

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Queens. This has been supported by the fairly rapid rate of increase in the incomes of the nonpoor, black as well as white, which in turn has also led to high demand for expansive housing in the most accessible locations, not only in Manhattan, but also in such prime neighborhoods as Brooklyn Heights, Riverdale, and Forest Hills.

These two types of additions to the housing stock have not, however, led to an emptying out of the gray areas, and to high vacancy rates in such areas, largely because of the increase in the nonwhite population. In some gray areas, the rate of ethnic succession has been extremely rapid—for example, the shift from a middle class Jewish to a Negro and Puerto Rican population in parts of the West Bronx. But the new residents of the middle class "gray" areas have not been migrants, in the main; they have moved from the older slums, where a new phenomenon has been observed: actual abandonment of large numbers of tenement buildings that cannot be maintained on the basis of market rents. On Manhattan's Lower East Side, the "thinning-out" process is now reaching the end of the road—not merely fewer persons per household but also fewer households.

In the Vernon model, this dispersal of the Negro and Puerto Rican population from the old slum areas to the middle-distant "gray" areas was one of the mechanisms that was expected to mitigate the principal economic problem of the central-city minority group population. This problem is the changing character and location of job opportunities—the shift of Manhattan employment upward on the skill and educational requirements scale, while manufacturing and similar jobs expanded elsewhere in the metropolitan region. The Vernon study anticipated this, as noted earlier, but the melting pot was expected to operate more or less as in the past. Negroes and Puerto Ricans would move outward, if still largely within the city's boundaries, closer to the new jobs, with a great deal of "reverse commuting." Also, there would be a substantial degree of occupational upgrading.

In reality, the melting pot *has* continued to function: Negroes and Puerto Ricans have moved outward; their skills and educational attainment have risen; and many new types of jobs, especially in white collar occupations, are open to them because of legal and other pressures. On the other hand, the unfavorable shifts in the nature (toward higher skills) and location (toward the suburbs) of job opportunities have been much faster than anticipated.

Moreover, there is growing impatience with a rate of economic progress for the central city minorities no faster than that experienced by earlier immigrant groups. Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of both the impatience of the poor and the acquiescence in this impatience by the white majority (at least during the early and middle 1960's) concerns welfare policies. A change in the commu-

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nity's perception of the acceptable minimum economic status for New York City residents has led to higher welfare allowances and more liberal acceptance policies from 1959. These policy changes have produced an enormous rate of increase in the welfare rolls, despite relatively low unemployment and rising wage levels.

The trouble with forecasting

The Vernon study concluded with a persuasively argued tone of complacency about the economic future of the residents of the city and region. Economic conditions would steadily and appreciably improve for the nonpoor; they would be satisfied with their housing options, particularly the chance for an escape to the suburbs (or to the outer and newer parts of the city itself). For the poorer segments of the city's population, economic conditions would also improve and would be recognized to be improving by the minority group members themselves. Their income levels would be rising; their housing opportunities, principally in the form of succession to the formerly middle class "gray" areas, would widen; and they would be benefiting from a variety of improvements in public services. The experts concerned with various specific problems of urban development might be highly dissatisfied, but, as Vernon put it:

> Much more important in numerical terms, however, are the inhabitants of the Region whose urban environment in the next twenty-five years will represent a major advance over that of their parents, or whose state will be so incomparably different from what went before as to defy comparisons. The offspring of the Jewish or Italian or Greek immigrant of 1900, comfortably established in his Westchester ranch house in 1965, will have the backdrop of his boyhood in the tenements of Brooklyn or the Bronx against which to compare his surroundings; for him, the disappearance of open space and the decline of the Region's older housing may be largely abstractions running counter to his personal experience. The Negro family, recently established in the forty-year-old apartments of the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, will have the seventy-year-old tenements of teeming Harlem as its prior point of reference. Even the Puerto Rican in-migrants on Manhattan's crowded West Side, while experiencing the restlessness and melancholy of the unhappy migrant, will presumably see something in their environment which they count as superior to life in San Juan or the agricultural back country of Puerto Rico; those who see no redeeming features in their New York environment will presumably have exercised the relatively easy option of returning to the Island.[7]

Vernon was right about the objective reality; but *not* about the subjective reaction to it. The reasons for this are not easy to sort out, but surely one of them is that the rate of change in most of the sig-

[7] Vernon, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

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nificant variables has been faster than expected—and rapid rates of social and economic changes are difficult to adjust to. *That is one of the troubles with economic forecasts. Even when they are right—as Vernon was, in the main—the implications we read into them can be terribly misleading.*

At any rate, no one is now complacent. The minority groups are notoriously dissatisfied with the rate of improvement and their reactions are disquieting, to use an extreme understatement, to the nonpoor white majority. The latter are hardly satisfied, despite the fact that the material conditions of life for most of them have improved greatly. Moreover, the views of elite social critics have spread widely: dissatisfaction with the urban physical environment, transportation services, and the lack of amenity in city life is no longer confined to a tiny, upper income minority. And the possibility of escape to the suburbs is no longer thought to be enough.

There is, of course, an economic approach to the resolution of this disparity between the objective and subjective reality: greatly accelerate the rate of improvement. This means much more rapid advances in income for the poor and equally rapid expansion of their housing opportunities. It also means heavy investments in improving the quality of urban life for poor and nonpoor alike. There is no shortage of answers to the question of how this can be done: ghetto economic development; suburbanization of minority groups; new income maintenance policies; and other policies, some contradictory and some complementary. Whether all this will be done is a serious question, now on the political agenda. Whether, if done, it will really produce satisfaction with life in New York, is another question that it is not an economist's prerogative to answer—assuming it as anyone's.

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NEWSREEL

Rays of hope?

New York City's job gains have been accelerating over the last three years, with private employment rising an average of 31,000 jobs a year, against an average annual loss of 3,000 in the first five years of the nineteen-sixties.

The brightening trend here was described yesterday by Herbert Bienstock, regional director of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, to more than 100 leaders at an institute on the city's changing economy.

The city's share of net job gains, both in the nation and the metropolitan area, has been increasing, he told the session, sponsored by the New York City Council on Economic Education and meeting at 345 East 46th Street. . . .

The city's over-all unemployment rate dropped below the nation's last year to 3.1 per cent against a national rate of 3.6 per cent. The city rate had been above the national in 1967, with 4.1 per cent unemployed, compared with 3.8 per cent in the country. . . .

The city's unemployment rate for nonwhites—4 per cent—was the lowest for 10 large cities last year. . . .

In a separate interview, Mr. Bienstock said his data could only show changes without explanations or appraisals of the role of a city administration.

In the early part of the decade, he said, the Vietnam war caused a rise in industry elsewhere, but more recently this has dwindled, while the city with its "greater concentration of soft goods" has been gaining. Also, he said, the growing "credit and investment society" has been reflected by soaring gains in banking and securities trading here.

Mr. Bienstock's report included the following:

¶Last year's rise of 71,000 jobs here was "the largest increase in the past 12 years." Since 1950, payroll jobs have grown by 264,000 —almost 200,000 of these since 1963.

¶The decline of 1,300 manufacturing jobs last year was "negligible." Manufacturing job losses have been held below 2,000 a year for three of the last four years, so that factory employment "seems to have stabilized itself somewhat."

¶Local government added 80,000 jobs in the past five years, including nearly 20,000 in 1968, with rises in education, hospital and protective services. But private nonmanufacturing jobs have been the major source of growth in the last three years, including more than 50,000 of last year's increase of 71,000. . . .

—Peter Kihss, *The New York Times*, May 1, 1969

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